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THE NEW YORKER

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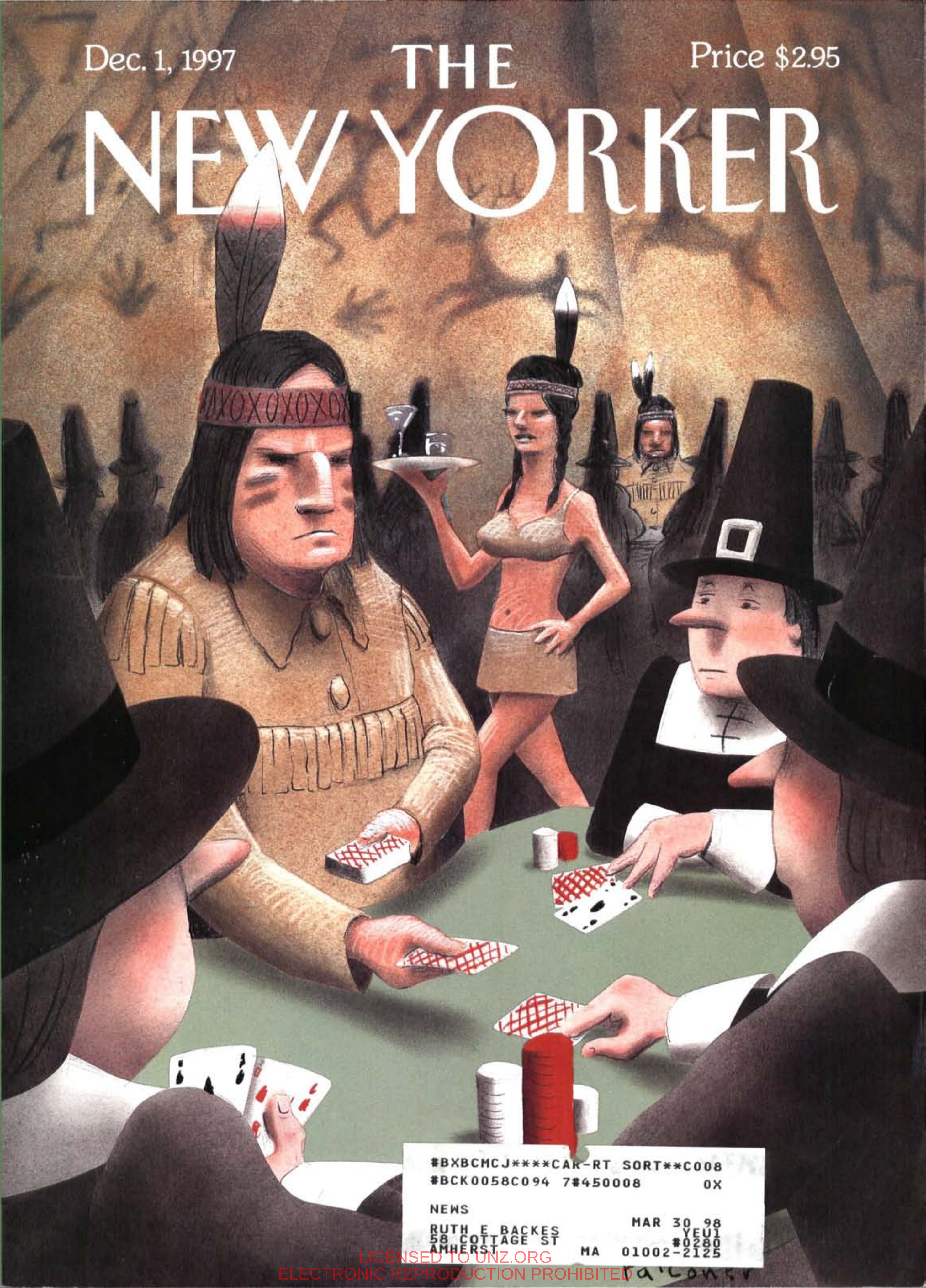

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MOUNTAIN LIVING

BY RALPH LAUREN

Today, the goals are about achieving a life that is rich in spirit; a searching for independence, a sense of continual self-discovery, an embracing of a healthy, physical existence. Today, life is about really living it.

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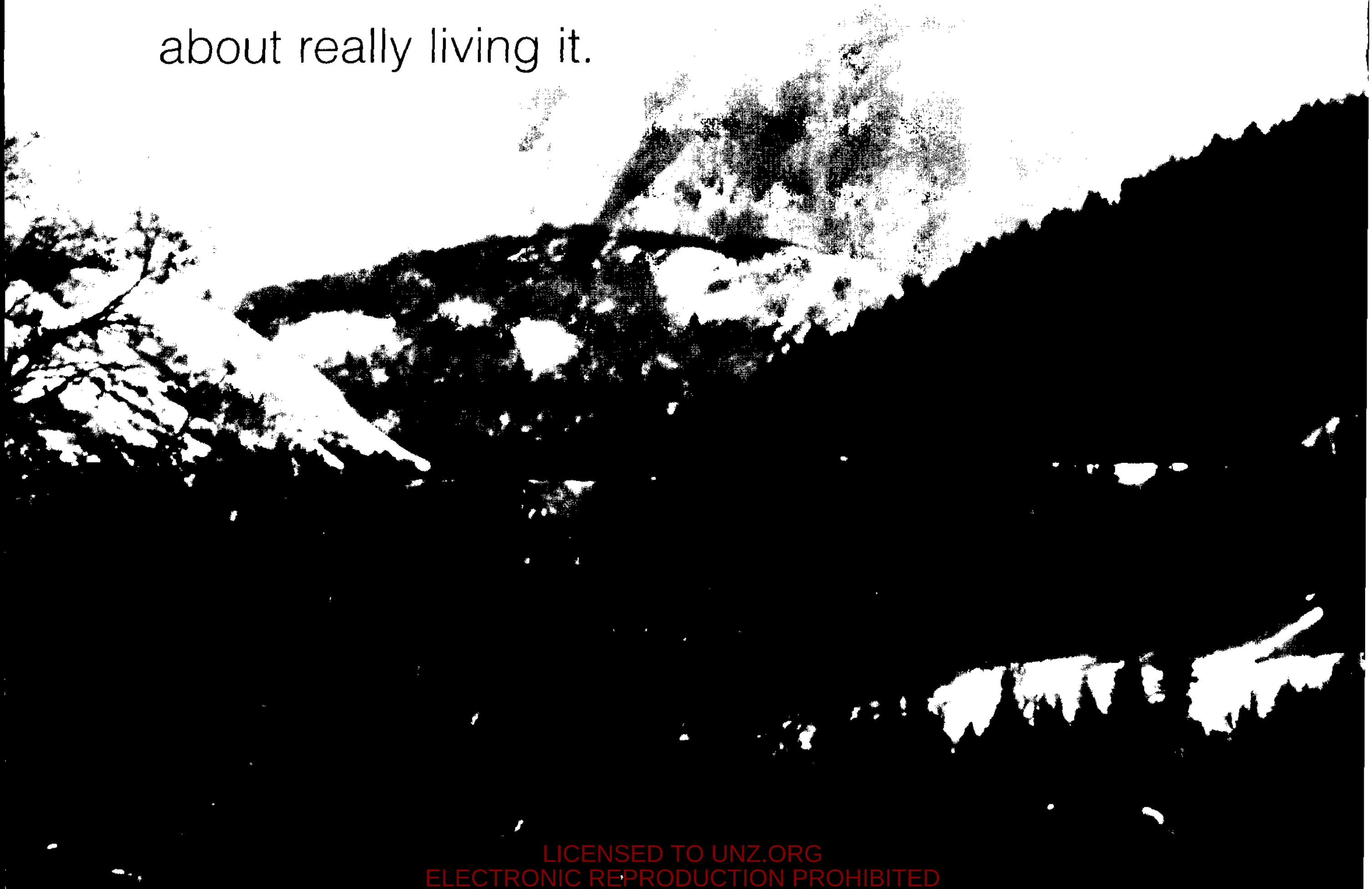

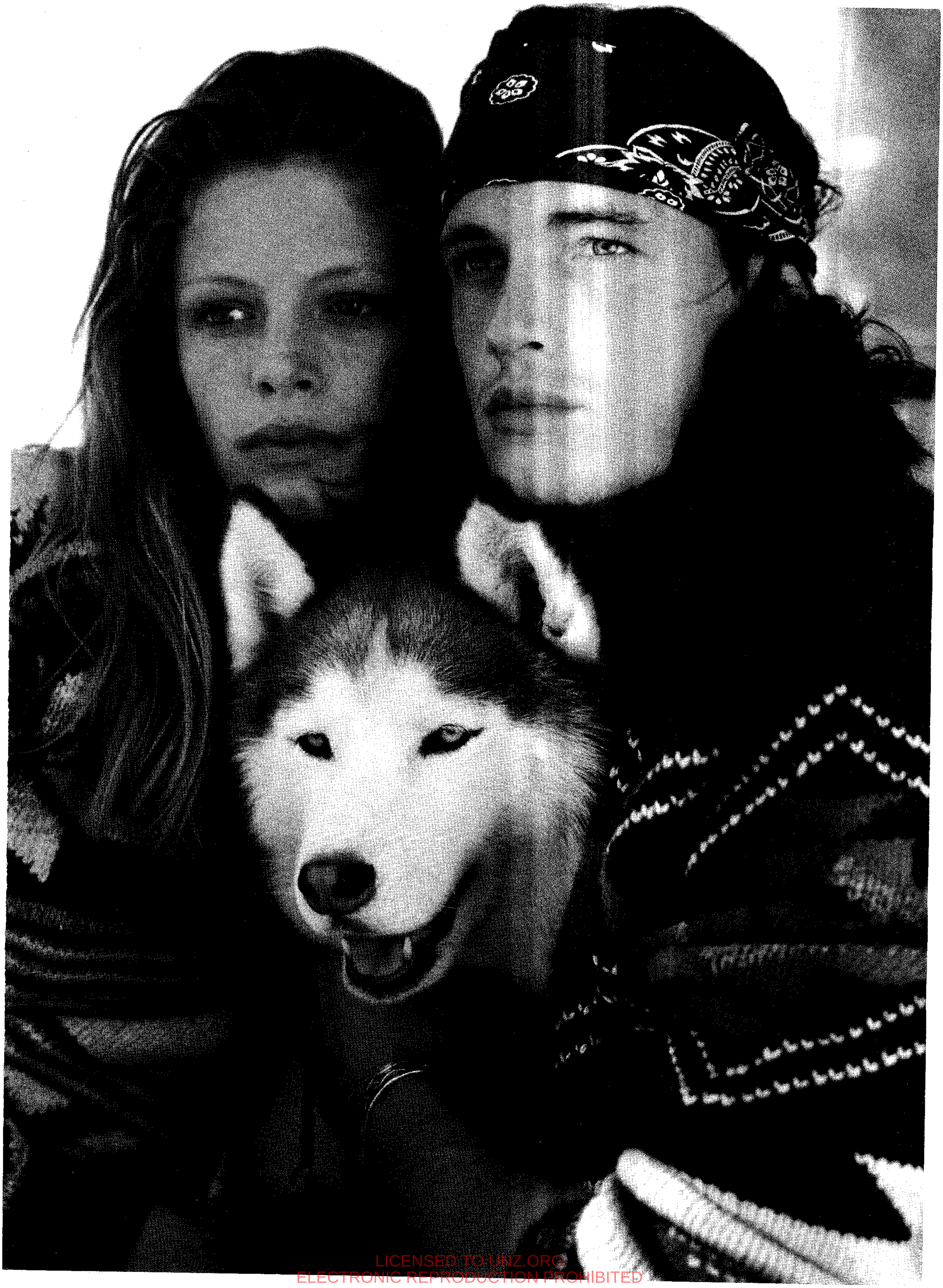

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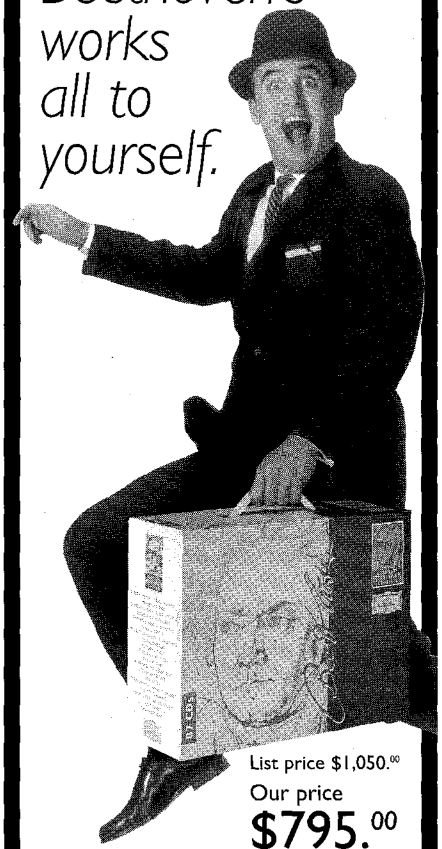

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: the last week of February and the first week of March, the last week of April and the first week of May, the last two weeks of June, the last week of August and the first week of September, the last two weeks of October, and the last two weeks of December) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXIII, No. 37, December 1, 1997. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $39.95; two years, $72.00. In Canada, one year, $83.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $91.00, payable in advance.

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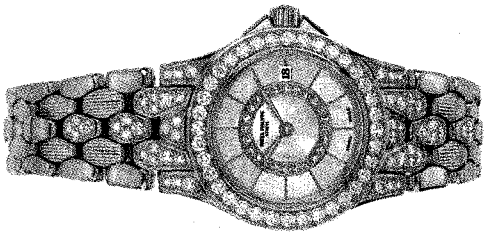

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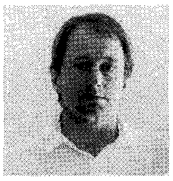

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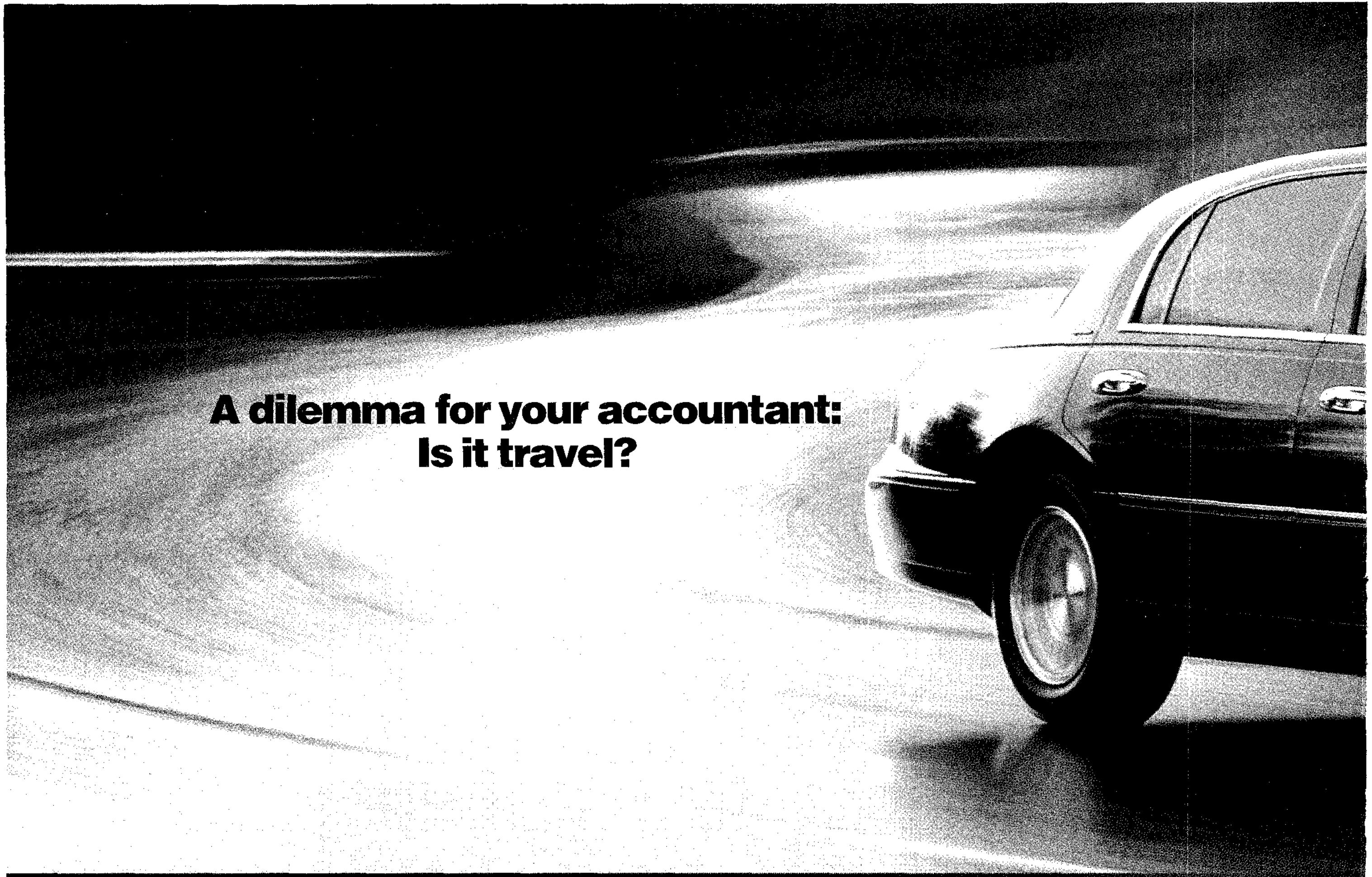
J@zz
Lincoln Center

FOOD for the SOUL

by Jim Macnie

Foundations are great. Benefactors a boon. But ambition is the most important ally the arts can claim. Bringing creativity to the masses with its potency intact requires a substantial amount of oomph. Jazz at Lincoln Center realizes this. As it begins its third season as a constituent of Lincoln Center, J@LC's hallmark is its aggressively enterprising nature. By developing components that include concerts, lectures, recitals, radio shows, master classes, children's workshops, and a film series, it has proved itself a resourceful organization with broad impact.

Since its debut in 1987, J@LC has turned a lot of heads. Its resident Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra travels the globe, playing its tunes as if on a holy mission. The enthusiasm comes from the top. Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis spearheads his sundry programs with a daunting vigor. In April of '97 the bandleader-trumpeter's most ambitious composition to date–the much discussed oratorio "Blood On The Fields"–earned him the Pulitzer Prize. It was a milestone: Marsalis is the first jazz musician ever to be presented the esteemed award.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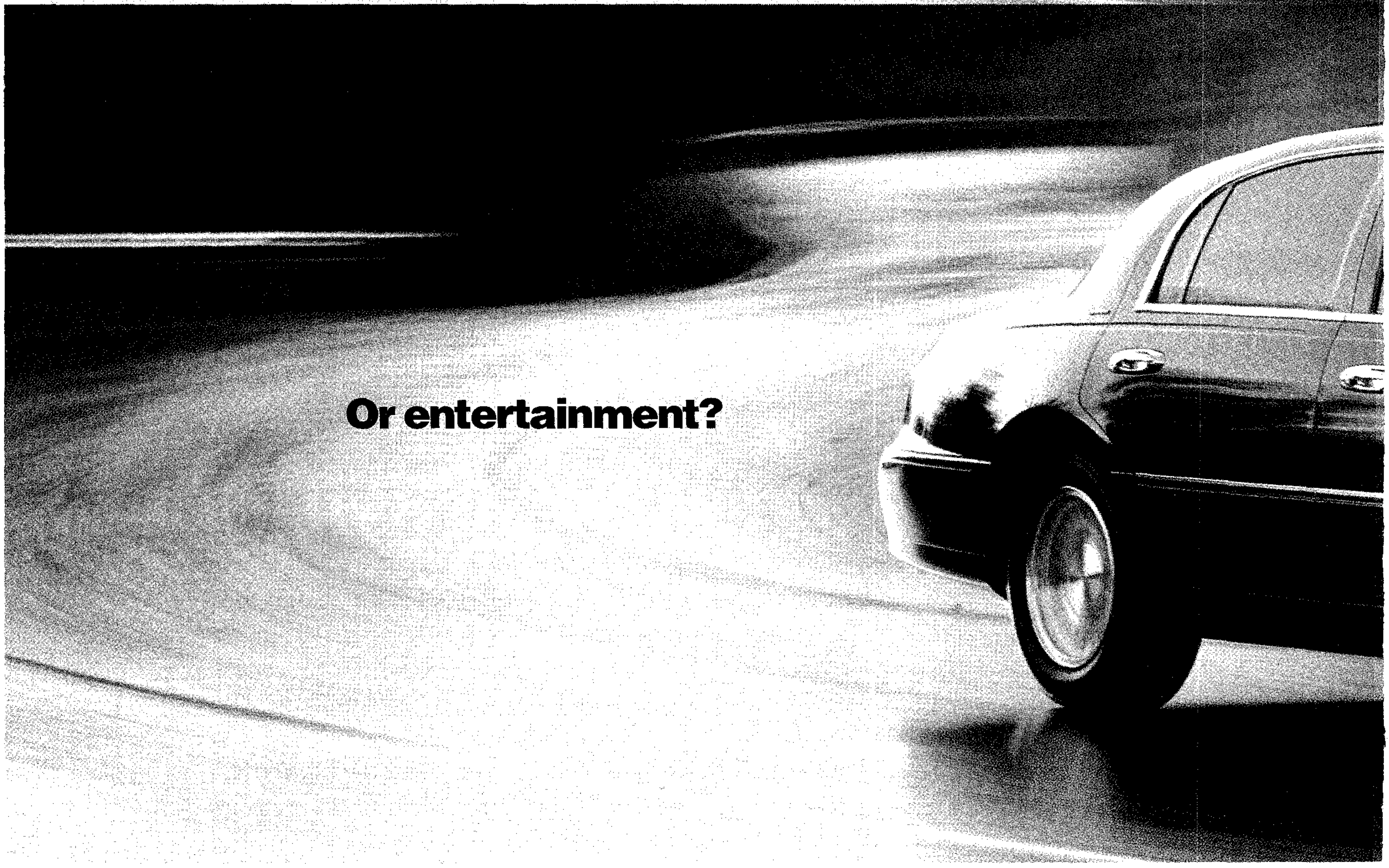
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FOOD FOR

"Bop patriarch" Dizzy Gillespie

To a large degree, J@LC has gained its stature by examining the past. That's a risky move, because jazz likes to think of itself as music of the moment. But Marsalis et al. savor the present as well, using classicism as a lightning rod to rejuvenate the language of swing. As a result, their repertory has become a perpetual search for new musical meaning. And quite often they're right: A lot can be learned when an inspired big band updates the songbook of a long-gone master. Whether discerning the emotional weight of rhythms or understanding the deployment of melody—stripping away the shroud of history is one of the most edifying tasks jazz can set for itself.

Previous seasons have found J@LC romping around the ever-vital domains of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie. Some shows were insightful, others merely clever; but each was heartfelt and a reminder of how much flat-out fun creativity can be. "The intent of making music should be obvious, and I think ours is," offers Marsalis. "You grow older and hopefully your understanding of the musical process deepens. The public knows that; our audience feels it for sure. That's why we've been able to stay out here. People like to hear musicians trying something. They'll stick with you if your intent is to provide them with something that's fun and thoughtful and different."

Valdes to perform at Penthouse series.

Such elements dominate J@LC's '97-'98 program, puckishly titled "Food for the Soul." Indeed, the menu is a smorgasbord which opened with a challenging first concert that addressed the complexities and grooviness of Dizzy Gillespie's large ensemble material. Diz's status as bop patriarch was solidified in the forties when he and Charlie Parker jolted jazz by crafting the style's frenzied motifs. The gregarious trumpeter often worked with a five-piece combo, and the intricacies of his small-band bop will be featured in the Jazz Jam concert series **(December 11 and 13; Alice Tully Hall, 8 P.M.).**

There's a tangential Gillespie connection in another scheduled show. During the early fifties, Gillespie was a lynch pin for the infusion of jazz and Afro-Cuban music. The alliance was a rhythmic boon, enhancing the improvisers' lexicon by introducing a wealth of seductive new cadences. "Cuba: Where The Rhythm Is Hot" **(January 22 and 24; Alice Tully Hall, 8 P.M.)** will unite several Cubans, including master pianists Marco Riso and Frank Emilio, for a look at the essence of the style. It's likely to demonstrate how finding affinities between related cultures enriches basic jazz language.

Marsalis's unrecorded large ensemble work set for March.

Illuminating the value of such tangential strains is key to J@LC's agenda. Marsalis' public persona is that of a teacher; the amount of time he spends coaching kids on the road is sizable. Likewise, the entire organization has become zealous in its educational campaigns. J@LC continues its Jazz for Young People concert series to the delight of youngsters and the rest of us. This season, irrepressible host Marsalis will provide some lively answers to the questions "Who is Dizzy Gillespie?" **(January 10)** and "What is Cool?" **(March 28). Both concerts will be held in Alice Tully Hall at 11 A.M. and 1 P.M.**

Cassandra Wilson, arguably the preëminent jazz singer of the day, is a vocalist who swings in innumerable ways. Her two Blue Note discs, "Blue Light 'Til Dawn" and the Grammy-winning "New Moon Daughter," show her to be as intrepid as she is inspired, offering spins on highly unlikely song choices. Her takes on Neil Young and Robert Johnson are not only authoritative but natural. And her role as the slave, Leona, in "Blood On The Fields" proved she can imbue any text she chooses with high drama.

Casting vocalists in adventurous settings is nothing new to J@LC. But Wilson has set herself a demanding task: interpreting pieces from the Miles Davis songbook **(December 1 through 6; Alice Tully Hall, 8 P.M.).** Davis's canon isn't exactly a singer's paradise;

Wynton Marsalis photo © Frank Stewart; Cassandra Wilson © William Claxton; all other photos courtesy of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

theSOUL

his ensembles dealt largely in supple instrumental interplay. But if anyone can do the job, it's Wilson. "There are so many options to choose from with Miles's stuff," she said recently. "A lot of it is about mood, and I really want that to be perfect." Her triumphant showcase at the 1997 JVC Jazz Festival in June debuted "Surrey With a Fringe On Top," a Miles Davis standard. He recorded it in the fifties, around the time he sported Brooks Brothers button-downs. Wilson's languorous tone, perhaps the result of some wonderfully slow living during her Mississippi childhood, gave the tune a dusty grace and an irresistible glide, qualities that are sure to resurface in her J@LC program.

Cassandra to spin Miles's canon next month.

Another jazz icon whose work is ceaselessly being reevaluated is Davis's old cohort, Wayne Shorter. The heroic mid-sixties Davis group, whose music stretched the boundaries of tempo and shape, is one of jazz's most revered ensembles. Shorter's tunes gave that band its richest material—heady, yet mesmerizing. Along with his own Blue Note titles issued around the same time, they've become a cornerstone of modern jazz, models of elliptical logic and emotional acuity. Someone, somewhere—be they pianist, trumpeter, or euphonium player—is likely taking a shot at a Shorter tune as you read this.

Davis: An unparalleled interpreter of love songs.

Yet there haven't been many concerts specifically curated to analyze the saxophonist-composer's influential oeuvre. That means "Speak No Evil" **(April 23 and 25; Alice Tully Hall, 8 P.M.),** celebrating the composer is important. The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, whose ranks include several of today's keenest improvisers, will welcome additional high-visibility guests to help them burrow into and explode out of Shorter's most expressive pieces. A new work has also been commissioned, and Shorter will be on hand to help plumb its depths. The show is sure to be one of the most discussed episodes of this year's calendar.

Still other performances underscore J@LC's aesthetic diversity. In a joint production with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" will be paired with Marsalis's brand-new work scored for the same instrumentation **(May 12; Alice Tully Hall, 8 P.M.).** The evening, capping a joint thirteen-city tour by the two companies, exemplifies one of the most intriguing musical developments of the nineties as jazz and classical music explore each other's turf.

Even the most resonant icons have a way of gathering dust, so every exploration into musical history—be it classical or jazz—is a positive step. Bolstered by exquisite musicianship, such forages have thrilled J@LC listeners for a decade now, opening the doors for like-minded programs by other musical groups. The oft-inspired Carnegie Hall Jazz Band was born in the wake of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. And J@LC, with its comprehensive game plan, provides an exemplary role model for smaller, more regional institutions in cities around the country. In the process, the status and quality of jazz is continuously reaffirmed.

(Jim Macnie is the jazz columnist for Billboard magazine.)

LCJO nod to Shorter in April.

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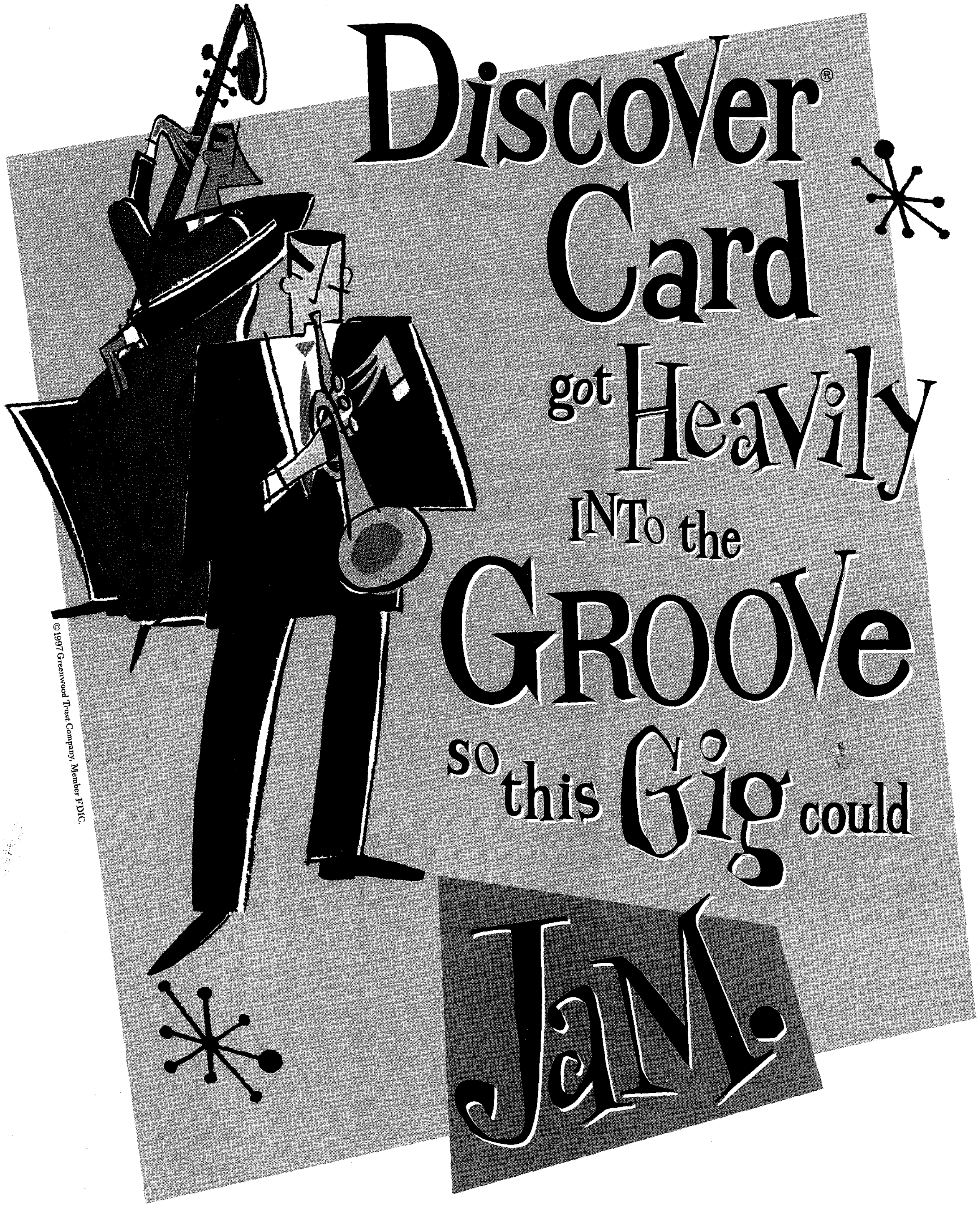
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COMMENT

EGYPTIAN GRAFFITI

The long history behind the Luxor massacre.

"When Eratostratus burned down the great temple of Diana at Ephesus, he did so specifically in order to ensure that posterity not forget his name," the art historian David Freedberg writes in "The Power of Images," about the strange history of violence directed at great cultural monuments. Last week's massacre of fifty-eight foreign tourists and four Egyptians at Luxor, while it was particularly heinous in the scale and viciousness of the killings, is only the latest variation on one of history's oldest forms of political theatre.

Precisely because of possessing extraordinary symbolic power, celebrated icons of art and antiquity have increasingly become objects not just of lunatic vandalism but of terrorist attack. In this century, Rembrandt's "The Night Watch"—a symbol of Dutch national unity—has been slashed twice. In 1972, someone took a sledgehammer to Michelangelo's "Pietà," in St. Peter's, the seat of papal power. When the Sicilian Mafia wanted to intimidate the Italian government in 1993, it planted bombs in the medieval church of San Giorgio in Velabro, in Rome, and also in the Uffizi Gallery, in Florence, the artistic heart of the Renaissance. In Egypt in 1996, Islamic fundamentalists opened fire on a busload of Greek tourists at a hotel near the Pyramids outside Cairo, killing eighteen people. And just two months ago, on September 18th, terrorists killed nine German tourists outside Cairo's Egyptian Museum, in a disturbing prelude to the latest attack.

In choosing Luxor for this carnage, the Islamic militants who are hoping to overthrow Egypt's secular government targeted not only the foreign infidels who contribute so much to its Western-oriented economy but also the country's most spectacular symbols of Pharaonic, pre-Islamic glory. Luxor is the setting of perhaps the greatest concentration of ancient monuments in Egypt: the fabulous temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Hatshepsut; the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens; the tomb of Tutankhamun; the Colossi of Memnon; and the giant, broken statue of Ramses the Great, which inspired Shelley to write "Ozymandias," his meditation on the temporal nature of power. Beyond the tourist area, Luxor still moves to rhythms of life which were established six or seven thousand years ago: men follow a horse and plow, women carry huge bundles of sticks on their heads, children drive donkey carts.

Moreover, for thousands of years the temples themselves have been targets of political attack. In the Temple of

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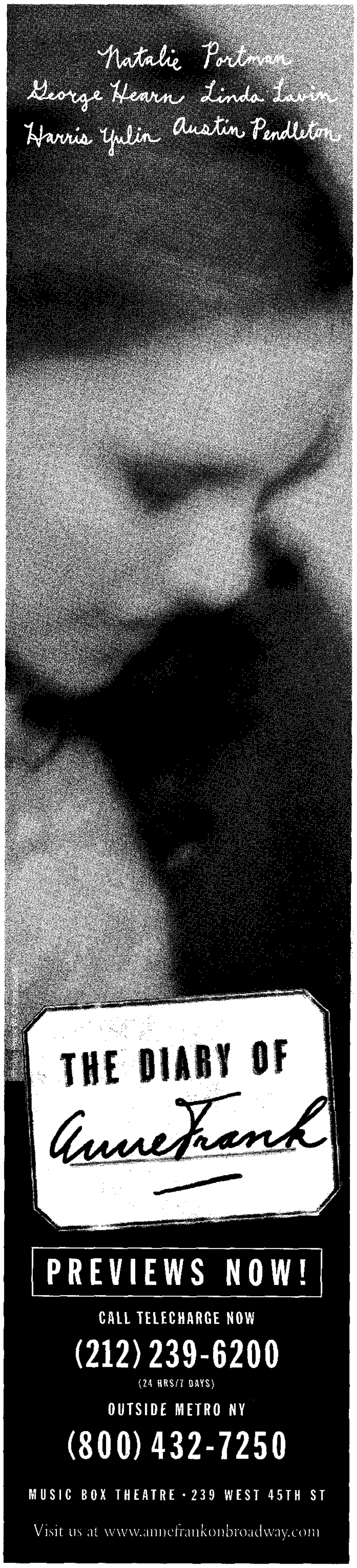

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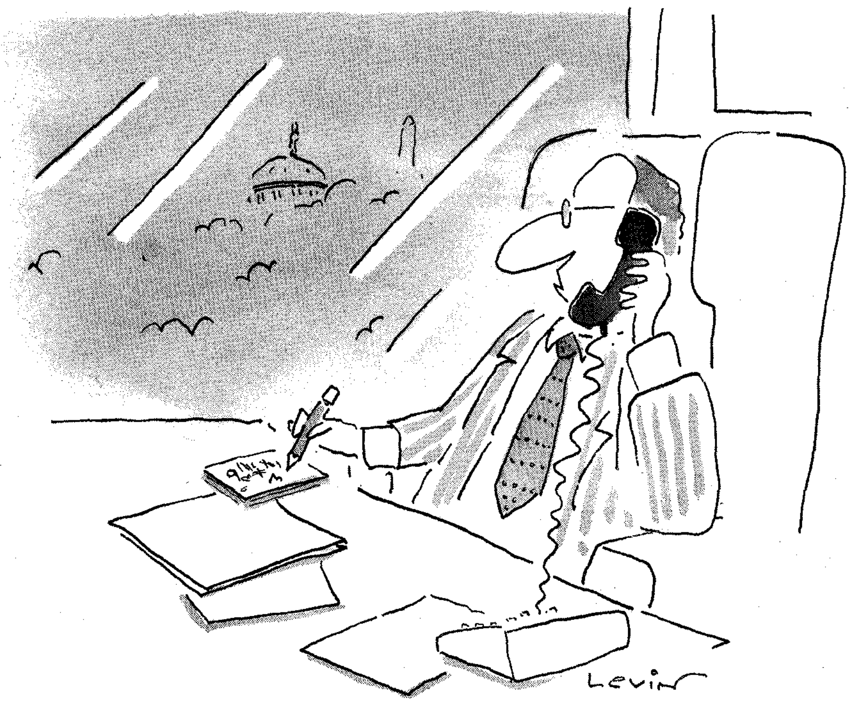

"I don't think you can distance yourself from the White House on this one. After all, you are the President."

• •

Hatshepsut, where the most recent killings took place, the last works of art seen by the tourists may have been the ghostly bas-relief images of the bearded Queen Hatshepsut, which were vigorously defaced during the reign of her successor and stepson, Thutmose III, in an attempt to eliminate her from history. There were similar efforts to erase any evidence of the boy Pharaoh Tutankhamun, which succeeded so well that his lavishly outfitted tomb remained undisturbed until it was discovered in the nineteen-twenties.

Elsewhere in Egypt, even the protection and the restoration of monuments have been charged with political meaning. In 1400 B.C., Thutmose IV claimed that the Sphinx had appeared to him in a dream, promising that if he would clear away the sand from its body it would make him Pharaoh. Thutmose thereupon did his best to restore the Sphinx in an attempt to legitimatize his reign. Foreign conquerors, from the Romans to Napoleon, carried off Egyptian obelisks in order to give symbolic weight to their imperial claims. In the tenth century, Islamic rulers of Egypt knocked the nose off the Sphinx, because local people were still worshipping this representation of a pagan god.

Although last week's terrorists killed people instead of smashing monuments, they, too, are trying to destroy history—to rid Egypt of anything they regard as un-Islamic. Besides demonstrating a horrifying disregard of human life, this was an act of profound futility. The civilizing influence of Ancient Egypt has long been ingrained in the Western imagination, as is manifested in the pyramid on the back of the dollar bill or in so many murals in American inner cities. A new book—"Moses the Egyptian," by Jan Assmann—finds in the Pharaoh Akhenaton's attempt to banish multiple deities in favor of a single god the origins of Jewish monotheism, a form of worship that in time would be adopted by Islam and brought back to Egypt.

The Islamic militants, who have had an uneasy relationship with Egypt's pagan monuments, would like to obliterate this rich interaction between Egypt and the West. But, as the enduring images of Hatshepsut, Akhenaton, and Tutankhamun demonstrate, what such efforts have done, more often than not, is to perpetuate what they sought to destroy. Instead of erasing the past, the terrorists have written yet another chapter in the long history of violence against monuments. The blood-flecked bullet marks on the Temple of Hatshepsut are simply a grotesque and peculiarly modern form of graffiti.

—ALEXANDER STILLE

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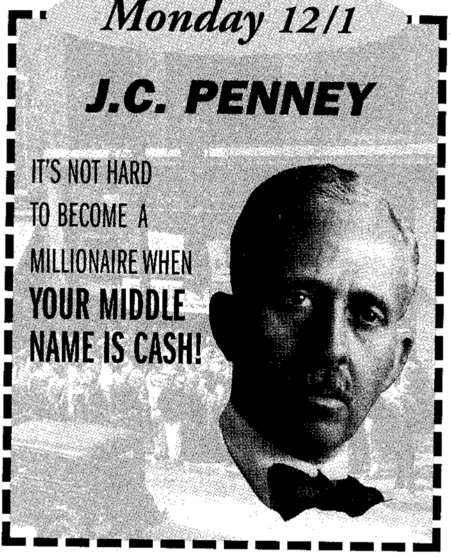

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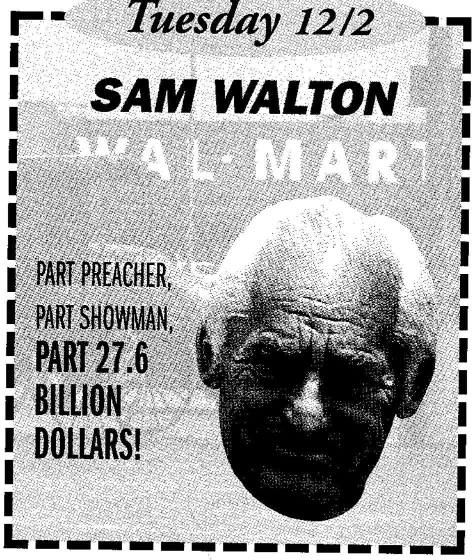
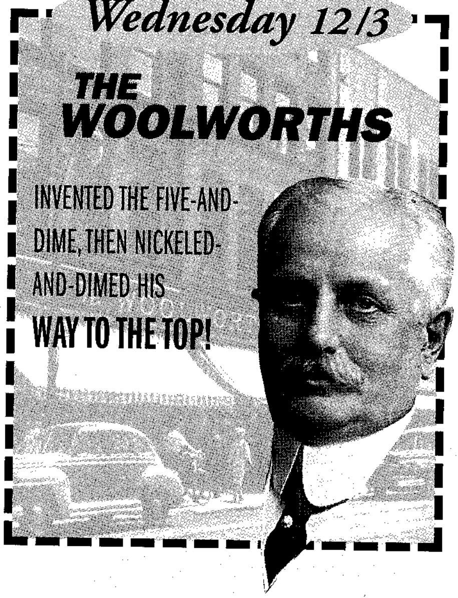


Tuesday 12/2

SAM WALTON

PART PREACHER, PART SHOWMAN, **PART 27.6 BILLION DOLLARS!**



Wednesday 12/3

THE WOOLWORTHS

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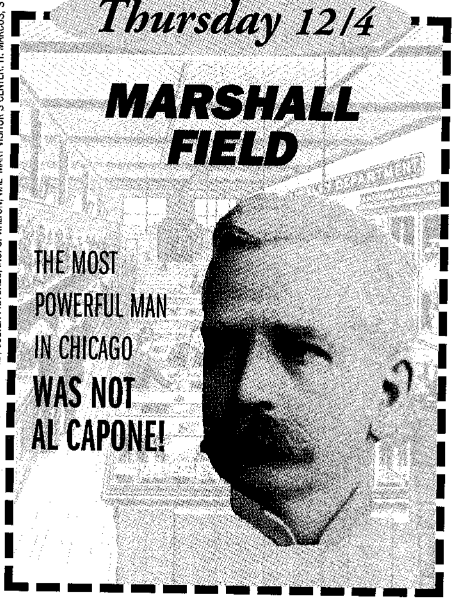

Thursday 12/4

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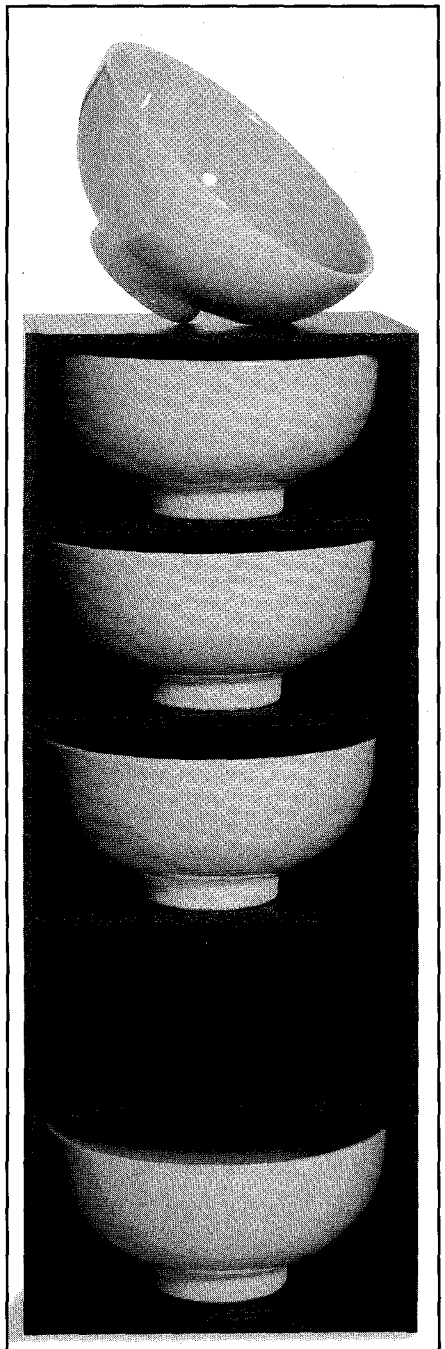

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THE MAIL

FAKE FRIENDS?

"Fakes," David Samuels's revealing article about Lex Cusack's apparent forgery of documents written by and about John F. Kennedy (Dept. of Disputation, November 3rd), makes it clear that Cusack overlooked a critical question: why would someone as astute as Kennedy have selected for his personal business a law firm with close ties to the Archdiocese of New York? It was common knowledge that Francis Cardinal Spellman, who was the head of the Archdiocese at the time, repeatedly went out of his way to express support for Nixon over Kennedy in the 1960 Presidential election, and, after Kennedy won, made known his preference for Johnson. It seems unlikely that Kennedy would have revealed "sensitive matters," the release of which could have had a negative and far-reaching effect on his political future, to a law firm associated with Spellman.

John L. Kelly
Siesta Key, Fla.

SINATRA AND HIS SHADOW

Frank Sinatra's distinction as a popular performer is that he was as hip as one could be and still appeal to a mass, mostly white, mostly bourgeois audience. If he had been more hip, he might have been a Mel Tormé; less hip, a Tony Bennett; too hip, a Mark Murphy. Sinatra's achievement was that he made all of us squares feel hip: he made us feel what John Lahr (in "Sinatra's Song," November 3rd) called "the self adrift in its pursuit of the destiny of 'me.'"

Russell C. Brown
Randallstown, Md.

Edward Sorel's cover for the November 3rd issue, "Strangers in the Night," showing the young and the mature Frank Sinatras' reactions to seeing each other, brought to mind a series of similar caricatures done in 1924 by Max Beerbohm. In one, a young Stanley Baldwin confronts a supremely confident older self and says, "Prime Minister? *You*? Good Lord!!" Sorel's drawing elegantly captures this idea without words.

Philip S. Anderson
Little Rock, Ark.

PEOPLE V. SCANDAL

Jeffrey Toobin's status report on the Jones-Clinton lawsuit, "Casting Stones" (November 3rd), made me reach for my trusty Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. I found the word "harass" defined as "1: To worry and impede by repeated raids; 2a: EXHAUST, FATIGUE; b: to annoy persistently." On the basis of this definition it seems that the real victims in this case are the American people. But how do we sue for justice, much less recompense for years of utter boredom?

David H. Workman
Glendale, Calif.

MUGGING FOR THE CAMERA

In "Crime as Entertainment" (The Talk of the Town, November 3rd) Bill Buford wrote about several horrific crimes he'd witnessed in New York, all of which were being filmed for television shows or movies. I am a director, and was involved one day in shooting a scene for a television sketch which depicted a purse snatcher's attack on a young tourist couple. There was to be a struggle at the Columbus Circle fountain, after which the thief would run about fifty feet down Broadway. To get a wide establishing shot, the camera was looking down from the seventh floor of a nearby building, and after rehearsals the crew and the security detail were moved well away from the action.

Take One: while the thief was grappling with the couple, the driver of a passing yellow cab sprang out of the car, and he collared our actor as he completed his run. It ruined the take, of course, but none of us cared.

David Barnhizer
Ridgefield, Conn.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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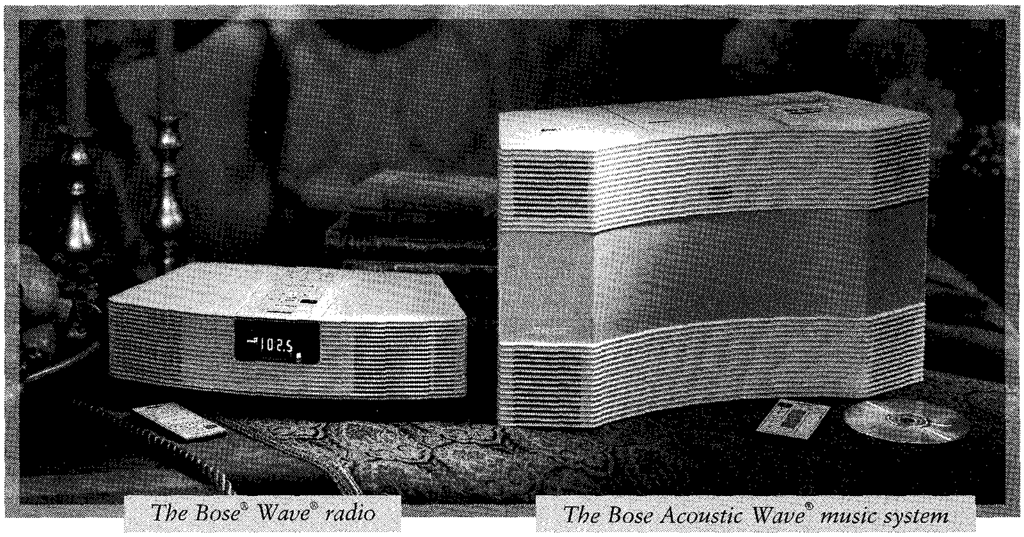

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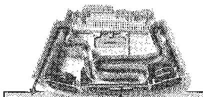

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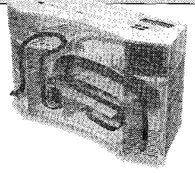

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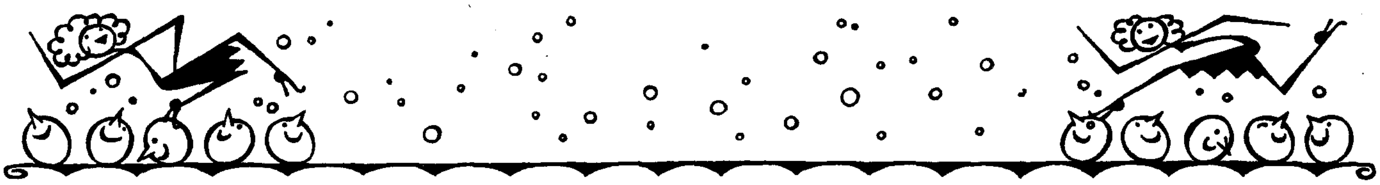

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—David Margulies stars in a performance of three of the author's short stories adapted for the stage. In previews. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Brides of the Moon—Four spacewomen and a monkey are stranded on Uranus, in a sci-fi comedy by the Five Lesbian Brothers. In previews through Dec. 1. Opens Dec. 2 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Clue: The Musical—The board game hits the boards, with Denny Dillon starring as a detective. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz in, his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman stars with George Hearn, Linda Lavin, Harris Yulin, Austin Pendleton, and Sophie Hayden, among others, in a new adaptation by Wendy Kesselman of Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's 1955 play. James Lapine is the director. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Mother—The Irondale Ensemble Project takes on Brecht's 1932 play about a Russian widow who becomes a revolutionary. Opens Nov. 26 at 8. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292.)

Mud, River, Stone—An African-American couple (Paula Newsome and Michael Potts) becomes stranded while vacationing in South Africa, in a new drama by Lynn Nottage. Brian Murray and Oni Faida Lampley are also in the cast. Roger Rees is the director. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Never the Sinner—A drama by John Logan, about the sensational 1924 trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb. In previews through Nov. 29. Opens Nov. 30 at 7. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

Pride's Crossing—A ninety-year-old woman who once swam the English Channel (Cherry Jones) relives the stages of her life, in Tina Howe's new play, directed by Jack O'Brien. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

A View from the Bridge—Michael Mayer ("Triumph of Love") directs Anthony LaPaglia, Allison Janney, and Stephen Spinella in the Roundabout's revival of Arthur Miller's modern tragedy. In previews. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Alligator Tales—Anne Galjour, the author of and sole performer in this ambitious play about a group of eight folks in South Louisiana, is a talented storyteller, who shows real compassion for her characters and makes some good points about the reality of life in the often romanticized Cajun country. Unfortunately, the procession of natural disasters which provides the work's narrative glue eventually grows tiresome. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Dec. 7.)

Always . . . Patsy Cline—Not quite a revue, not quite a play, this spirited and Nashville-slick celebration of the late, great country singer is, rather, a streamlined song-delivery device. Tori Lynn Palazola doesn't sound exactly like Patsy, but she's good at doing Patsy. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

As Bees in Honey Drown—J. Smith-Cameron is hilarious as a flimflam woman, in Douglas Carter Beane's comic indictment of America's obsession with fame; the script's satirical power sours only when, every once in a while, it takes itself too seriously. Mark Brokaw directed. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Ballad of Yachiyo—Philip Kan Gotanda's new play, based on his aunt's life, is the tale of seventeen-year-old Yachiyo, the daughter of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii, who is sent away from home and boyfriend to learn the tea ceremony; she falls in love with a married man and comes to a bad end. The script tends toward melodrama, but touching scenes—between Yachiyo and her father, between lovers who don't love each other any more—and incisive performances take it beyond simple-minded entertainment. Sala Iwamatsu is strong as Yachiyo, and Sab Shimono, always a welcome presence, has a sweet dignity as her father. Bruce Schwartz's puppets and Loy Arcenas's set add to the seductiveness of the evening. Deftly directed by Sharon Ott. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 7.)

The Batting Cage—In Joan Ackermann's compelling play, set in a Holiday Inn in Florida, two sisters meet for the purpose of scattering their other sister's ashes. They are as unalike as can be: the older one (Veanne Cox) is high-strung and given to preening and to self-absorbed, and often hilarious, yammering; the younger one (Babo Harrison) is schlumpy and strangely silent. (Ackermann, in addition to having a good ear for the way people talk, has a good ear for the way people *don't* talk.) This may sound like a classic sitcom setup, but the play is free of predigested jokes and packaged unpredictability; what it has instead is genuine surprise and a soul. Under the excellent direction of Lisa Peterson, Cox and Harrison are perfect. Also with Justin Hagan and Anne Pitoniak. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/24/97.) (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 7.)

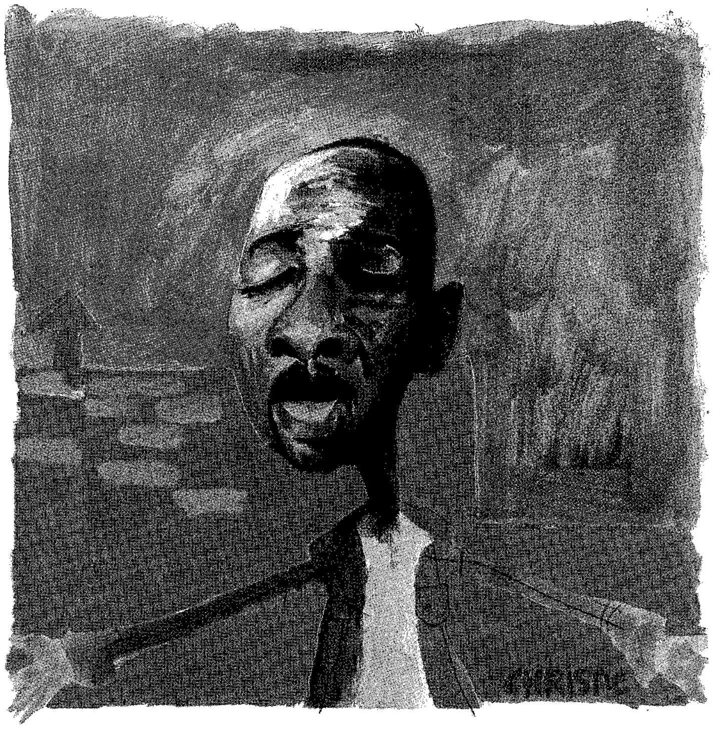
Defying Gravity—Jane Anderson has based her new drama on the disastrous launching, in 1986, of the space shuttle Challenger. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

A Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds—Tony Kushner's adaptation of S. Ansky's 1920 play, based on the Yiddish folk tale about predestination and the paths to God, doesn't have as much of Kushner's powerful, playful language as you might expect (and eventually all the nods to the Holocaust become heavy-handed). However, Brian Kulick's strong-minded direction, together with Naomi Goldberg's evocative choreography and a clever set by Mark Wendland, give the evening a vital force that makes the rabbi's late declaration about God—"No matter how few [of us] there are, tell Him we will find Him. To deliver our complaints"—a truly stirring reaffirmation of the strength of faith in the face of disaster. Terrific original music by the Klezmatics. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Nov. 30.)

Filumena—Maria Tucci co-stars with Tony Amendola in her own adaptation of Eduardo DeFilippo's 1946 romantic comedy. A Blue Light Theatre Company production, directed by James Naughton. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

Flight—The Ensemble Studio Theatre presents a play by Arthur Giron, about Wilbur and Orville Wright. Jamie Richards is the director. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982. Closes Nov. 30.)

Fly—Joseph Edward turns in a powerhouse performance in his own play. It's billed as an exploration of black men's lives in America, but at its most affecting—comically and tragically—it's also the beautifully crafted tale of *one* black man's life in America. Arthur French and Amy-Monique Waddell—who play all of the other characters—turn in equally fine performances. Directed by Wynn Handman. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)



Joseph Edward, in "Fly," at the American Place Theatre.

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The Forest—Aleksandr Ostrovsky's 1871 play pulls out just about every cliché available, and yet, in this Pearl Theatre Company production directed by Shepard Sobel, it's still fun (if a bit long). The principal source of pleasure is Richard Thompson, who, as the tragedian and main plot device, turns in a performance worthy of Garrick while remaining charmingly aware of how overwrought such acting seems to modern audiences. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Nov. 30.)

Forever Tango—This stepchild of Vegas and Buenos Aires, created and directed by Luis Bravo, gets everything right. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Frida K.—In a one-woman show written by Gloria Montero, Allegra Fulton shows us Frida Kahlo as a smart and funny emotional roller coaster. While dressing for the first solo show of her paintings in Mexico, on the night before one of her legs, crippled by polio, is to be amputated, the forty-six-year-old Kahlo tells us the story of her life: why she paints, why she loves Diego Rivera, and how she goes on after illness, tragedy, and betrayal, with stops along the way for fashion tips and a fast, brilliant dissection of the thirties version of radical chic. The script isn't entirely coherent emotionally, but Fulton's performance, including her rapid transformations (schoolgirl, invalid, seductress), is mesmerizing and utterly convincing. Directed by Peter Hinton, on a beautiful set adapted by Glenn Davidson from Kent Garnhum's original. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 334-0962. Closes Nov. 30.)

Hallow'd Ground—A one-man show about Abe Lincoln, starring Richard Bourg and directed by Gene Frankel. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. 279-4200.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—Sandra Bernhard brings her new performance piece to the Westbeth Theatre Center. (151 Bank St. 307-7171.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—A good-natured if somewhat choppy revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. An Irish Repertory Theatre production) (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Ivanov—Kevin Kline stars in David Hare's adaptation of Chekhov's 1887 drama, in a staging directed by Gerald Gutierrez. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

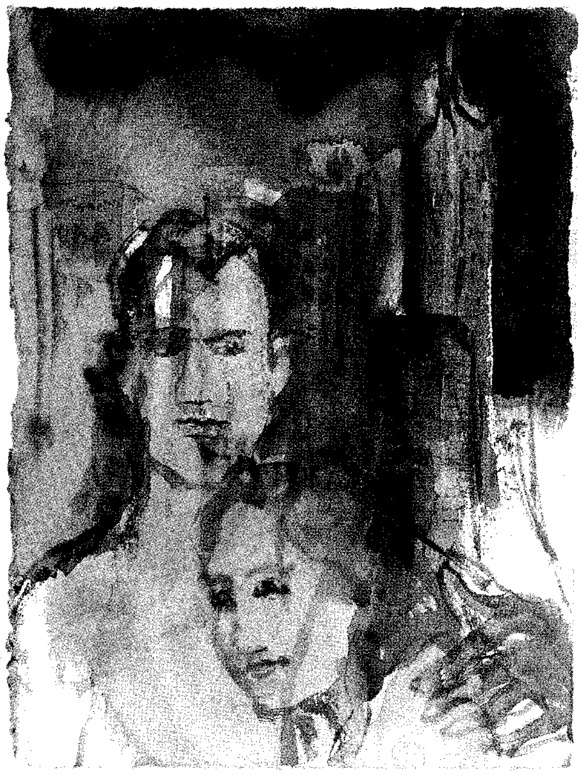
Jackie—Margaret Colin portrays Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, in Gip Hoppe's comedy, which satirizes public perceptions of events in the title character's life. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Last Session—A reworked version of a musical by Steve Schalchlin (music and lyrics) and Jim Brochu (book), about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has proved to Disney that taking the high theatrical road can be a good business decision. On a superb protean set by Richard Hudson, she uses a wide range of puppet styles, African-inspired fabrics, Zulu chants, and borrowed but effective avant-garde staging tricks to create a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film. From the moment the animals arrive majestically onstage, the story is liberated form its soppy cartoon naturalism. Taymor submerges the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one, especially in the traditional score, by Elton John and Tim Rice. Garth Fagan is the choreographer. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

A Madhouse in Goa—Judith Ivey leads the cast in a drama of intrigue by Martin Sherman ("Bent"), which takes place over two decades on two Greek islands. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3392.)

Major Barbara—Melissa Errico and Boyd Gaines star in an Irish Repertory Theatre staging of George Bernard Shaw's 1905 play. Tony Walton is the director. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)



Bradley Whitford and Patricia Clarkson, in Richard Greenberg's "Three Days of Rain."

DEBORAH ROSS

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mind reader takes volunteers from the audience in his show of telepathic feats. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mojo—The rock-and-roll scene in London in 1958 is the setting for the British playwright Jez Butterworth's comedy. Neil Pepe is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Dec. 7.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Well acted by Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis, and crisply directed by Scott Zigler. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Proposals—In Neil Simon's new comedy, directed by Joe Mantello, a family reunites at its vacation home in the Poconos. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively. Its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, is new to Broadway yet possesses the brio of a Stewart Granger and a good voice to boot; Christine Andreas, who plays his wife, overdoes her vibrato but still sounds lovely. The one human fly in the ointment is Terrence Mann, who, as the villain of the piece, seems intent on proving that he can play a bad guy in his sleep. Andrew Jackness's sets are top-drawer, and Jane Grenwood's costumes are sensational. Nan Knighton, who committed the crime of the lyrics, also wrote the book, which is quite good. Frank Wildhorn, of "Jekyll & Hyde" fame, wrote the music. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Side Show—A promising premise for a musical—the story of Violet and Daisy Hilton, Siamese twins who grew up in the world of carnivals and became a vaudeville act in the thirties—flattened by bombastic shlock rock, an unimaginative set, and a book that reduces the sisters' entire existence to a pulp-romance plot. Nevertheless, most of the actors manage to carry themselves with dignity. (11/3/97) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Sketches on Morning, Noon & Night—Spalding Gray presents his latest monologue, a work in progress. Mondays, through Dec. 22. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Street Corner Symphony—A revue of music and dance from the sixties and seventies, directed by Marion J. Caffey. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Tell-Tale—Theatre Couture's comic thriller puts a drag spin on Edgar Allan Poe. Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat are the stars. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

Three Days of Rain—There's a deeply felt, unutterable sadness at the core of Richard Greenberg's play, in which three no longer young people try to sort out the legacy, financial and emotional, left to them by their parents. John Slattery, as gaunt and graceful as a ghost, gives an astonishingly moving performance as an articulate and ironic lost soul; Patricia Clarkson is good as his more stable sister; and Bradley Whitford is terrific as his oldest friend. In the second act, the three actors play these characters' parents; what we find is how little we can ever know of the past. Every element of this production, which was directed by Evan Yionoulis, rings true, right down to Chris Barreca's set, a SoHo loft that's so forlorn it practically moans. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Triumph of Love—A musical adaptation of the 1732 Marivaux farce which brims with intelligence, feeling, musicality, and wit. The characters are more or less stock types, but the actors, led by Betty Buckley and F. Murray Abraham, as a self-deluded sister and brother, bring them to full ripeness. Michael Mayer directed. (11/3/97) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt perform both classical and pop selections while recounting their years of musical training, in a comedy they co-wrote. Directed by Gloria Muzio. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **MERE MORTALS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

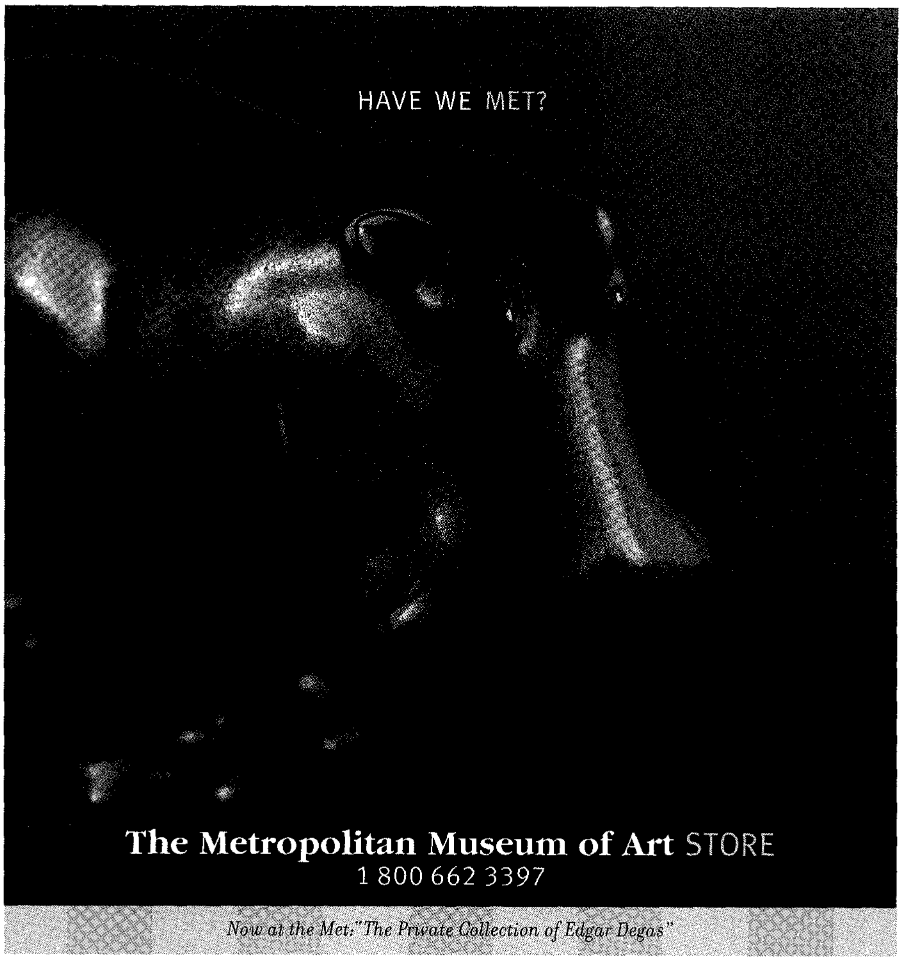
New York City Ballet—The annual cycle of Christmas parties begins early, with the traditional dance bash at Clara and Fritz's and its magical aftermath; performances of "The Nutcracker" continue through Jan. 4. (New York State Theatre. 870-5070. Nov. 28 at 8, Nov. 29 at 2 and 8, Nov. 30 at 1 and 5, and Dec. 2 at 6.)

"Free Radicals"—The sixteen-member Sydney Dance Company presents a full-length work whose percussion score (played on curtains, pipes, fishbowls, bodies, etc.) was composed in the studio as the choreographer, Graeme Murphy, created the movement for his athletic troupe around—and occasionally with—the three musicians. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 8, Nov. 29 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 30 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Una Noche de Tango"—Milena Plebs and Miguel Angel Zotto, who previously appeared in New York in "Tango Argentino," return with their own company, Tango x 2, in a full-length work. This is not the American tango (in which the upper body and the head are allowed to move) but the purer Argentine style (with the torso still and the action all in the legs). "You are closer to the other person," Plebs explains. "You feel the other person, and it is very intimate." She ought to know: since she and Zotto met in "Tango Argentino," they have married, formed Tango x 2, and divorced, tangoing all the while. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 8, Nov. 29 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 30 at 2 and 6.)

Split Stream—Fiona Marcotty and Pam Tanowitz share the bill, with the former presenting "Into the Skin of Midnight," a suite for five women, and the latter performing with Open 24 Hours Dance Co., her seven-member troupe, in three works: "Victory Garden," "Duck the Oyster," and "Red Herring." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 28-30 at 8.)

Improvisation Festival/NY—The sixth such multi-venue adventure, curated by Julie Carr and Sondra Loring, offers all manner of spontaneous choreography over the upcoming fortnight, including classes, round-robin dance partnering, and improvised performances. Among the highlights: one collaboration, marking World AIDS Day, between Pauline de Groot and Merian Soto at Movement Research (Judson Church, 55 Washington Sq. S., 477-6635; Dec. 1 at 8), and another, matching Katie Duck and her Magpie troupe with Kirstie Simson and Sondra Loring, in the first of five performance slates at Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Dec. 2 at 8:30. For information about festival events, which continue through Dec. 14, call 718-832-5328.)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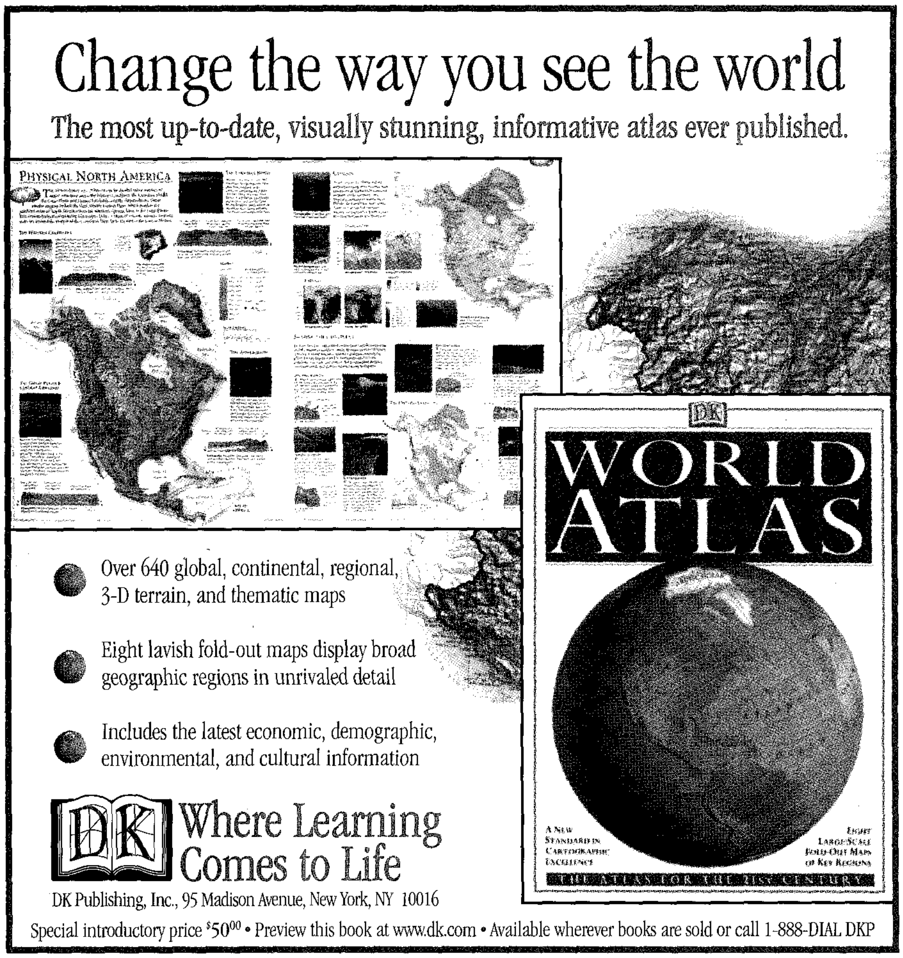
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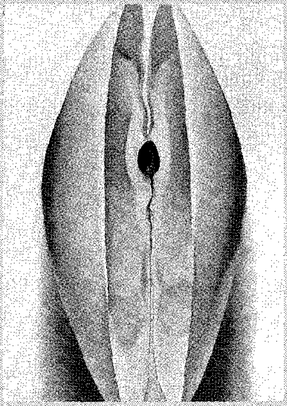

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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Fred Ho—Why should the other arts have all the theatrical fun? Saxophonist and composer Ho wants a piece of the action, too. His recent work uses Asian mythology as grist for elaborate concept pieces. In other words, don't expect extended jamming on "I Got Rhythm." (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 7:30 and Nov. 29 at 3 and 7:30.)

Morrissey—The King of Misery is back, supporting his latest solo release, "Maladjusted." With the Smoking Popes. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 26 at 8.)

Pat Metheny Group—Over the past two decades, the boundary-breaking guitarist has recorded with David Bowie, Ornette Coleman, Joni Mitchell, Herbie Hancock, Steve Reich, and his own Grammy-winning group. His new album, "Imaginary Day," is his twenty-fourth (and his group's twelfth), and, as with all his work, from his knotty free-jazz excursions to his fragile acoustic collages, the thread that holds it together is his guitar, a burbling purr that remains one of the most instantly identifiable signatures in contemporary music. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 8.)

Fleetwood Mac—Like any recommissioned battleship, it deserves to be seen, if only for the soap-opera psychodrama. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Nov. 27 at 8.)

Mike LeDonne Trio—This pianist knows when to kick off his shoes and when not to: on midtempo blues and leisurely ballads he takes all the time he needs, but on bop dashes he's out of the gate without looking back. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9491. Nov. 28 at 5:30.)

The Wallflowers / Ben Harper—By now, everyone knows that Jakob Dylan has a famous dad whom he won't talk about—he's his own man, gosh darn it. The irony, of course, is that his group sounds like Dad's old backing group, The Band. Live, the Wallflowers are a competent (if a tad enervating) act. / The psychedelic folk revisionist. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Nov. 28-29 at 7:30.)

Electric Hot Tuna—Jorma Kaukonen and friends, back on the road. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center. Nov. 28 at 8.)

Mary Black—This singer has the Irish knack for finding narrative in even the simplest refrains. On her recordings, a studio sheen sometimes obscures her soprano, especially on the softer, more New Age numbers. But onstage she's enchanting. With the young Irish singer-songwriter Andy White. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 28 at 8.)

Tony Bennett—The hype behind his promotion to MTV hipster has died down, but Tony Bennett is far from over: his voice is still sublime, his stage presence elegant and congenial, and his choice of material as impeccable today as it was forty years ago. (Westbury Music Fair. 516-334-0800. Nov. 28-29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 7.)

"Killooleet Sing"—The annual Seeger-family sing-along, with Pete Seeger and a host of banjo-, guitar-, and Autoharp-playing friends. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Nov. 29 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

Don Byron and Existential Dread / Medeski, Martin, and Wood—Clarinettist Byron is ready to stir up trouble again with a new band, which will assist him in bending genres. / The organ-bass-and-drum trio examines the distinction between jazz funk and funky jazz. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 29 at 7:30.)

Arlo Guthrie—*The folksinger's annual* Thanksgiving concert. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 29 at 8.)

Puff Daddy & the Family—A *Who's Who* of chart-busting R. & B. acts, headed by Sean (Puffy) Combs, who virtually monopolized pop radio and MTV this year with his canny appropriations of other people's material. (Sting is now twice as rich thanks to Combs's decision to turn "Every Breath You Take" into the backing track for his "I'll Be Missing You.") Combs's latest protégé, Mase, currently has the No. 1 record in the country. With the duelling dirty-mouthed divas Foxy Brown and Lil' Kim, the slickly funky Usher, and the rappers Busta Rhymes and Jay-Z. (Madison Square Garden. Dec. 1 and Dec. 4 at 7. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. 516-794-9300. Dec. 3 at 7.)

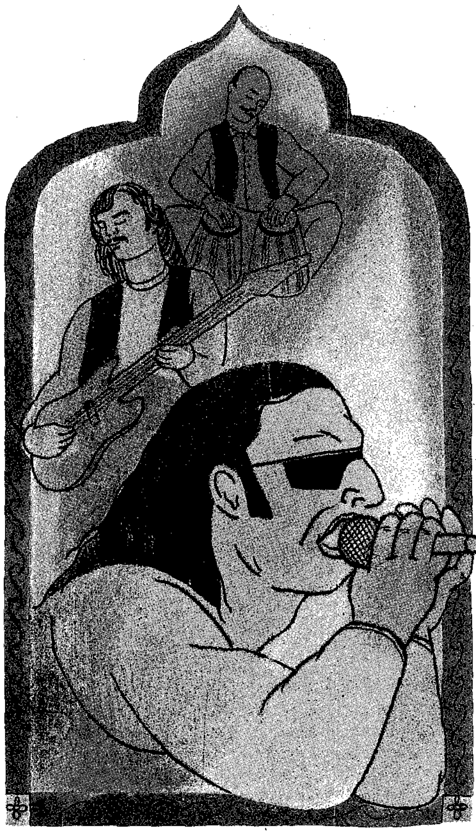
The Sundays—When this gilded English guitar group, fronted by the sunny-voiced Harriet Wheeler, first appeared, in the early nineties, it seemed as if it had a brighter future than the less talented Cranberries; but after one minor hit it disappeared. Now the band is back, with the aptly titled "Static & Silence," which finds it in fine jangly form. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. Dec. 1 at 8.)

"Cassandra Sings Miles"—Miles Davis used his horn to sing; Wilson uses her voice as a horn. Offering retailored arrangements of some of Davis's favorite love songs, Wilson will pay tribute to the master interpreter while claiming a place as the premier interpreter of her day. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 1-2 at 8. Continues through Dec. 6.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 26 and Nov. 29: **dave davies**, the Kinks guitarist, author, and embattled little brother of Ray, offers solo tunes and anecdotes. Nov. 28: Former Band drummer and vocalist (and sometime actor) **levon helm** and his Crowmatix. **scotty moore** and **d. j. fontana**, Elvis's guitarist and drummer,



Junoon, at Wetlands.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

throw a party on Dec. 1-2, with guests Max Weinberg, Phoebe Snow, Joe Louis Walker, and more.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Boogie-woogie Delta piano player **PINETOP PERKINS** lays it down on Nov. 28-29.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. Nov. 26: **DANIEL CARTIER** finishes up his Wednesday residency. The fine up-and-coming singer-songwriter **LUCY KAPLANSKY** comes in on Dec. 2. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 26: The last time **TODD RUNDGREN** played here, he turned in a depressingly shrill evening's worth of guitar noodling. Still, he remains one of rock's most original iconoclasts, and, if he decides to actually show up, the possibilities are endless. Nov. 28: **GUSTER.**

Izzy Bar, 166 First Ave., at 10th St. (228-0444)—For some time now, this tiny below-stairs room has been the home base of **FONTAINE** (Nov. 29), but the band's propulsive funk, with its serious rock overtones, has gotten too big to fit the space. It's time to graduate.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 27: **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS.** Dec. 2: From London, the **BEVIS FROND**, brainchild of psychedelia-mad Nick Saloman. With Canadian alternarockers **TREBLE CHARGER.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—In the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist (and poet-novelist) **GIL SCOTT-HERON** (Nov. 26) was fusing jazz and funk textures with sobering political rap. He's been on tour ever since. Nov. 28: The house band of your dreams, the **BROOKLYN FUNK ESSENTIALS**, explodes the dictionary of funk with fearsome authority. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—"Cosmic Cowboy" **JERRY JEFF WALKER** (Nov. 28-29) is still best known for his early-seventies ode to a fellow named Bojangles. Dec. 2: The dynamic alternative rock of **HELIUM**, featuring the vase-shattering voice of Mary Timony. With local post-punk faves **BLONDE REDHEAD** and **LES SAVY FAV.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Turning the tables on so many seventies guitarists who dabbled in the music of the East, the Pakistani rock group **JUNOON** (Nov. 30) mines British and American rock from twenty years ago, recasting Stones, Zeppelin, and Aerosmith riffs as South Asian pop exotica. A strong undercurrent of burbling tablas and other percussive elements leavens Salman Ahmad's expert but often high-fructose guitar work; the end result is an enjoyable, unpretentious confluence of East and West.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**ANDREA MARCOVICCI** has taken over the Oak Room through Jan. 3 with the songs of Mabel Mercer. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The **DAVE HOLLAND** quintet is in Nov. 27-30. What is Holland's greatest gift—his extraordinary talent for the bass or his knack for assembling first-rate bands? He comes to New York far too rarely for a certified jazz titan. Dec. 1: **CHICO O'FARRILL AND HIS AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Arranger and bandleader O'Farrill has made one of the most welcome comebacks of the late nineties. His balance of steaming Latin rhythms, fervid bop improvisations, and resonant horn charts is as bracing as ever. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 30: This edition of *Über*-pianist **HERBIE HANCOCK'S** quartet, with saxophonist Craig Handy, bassist Jeff Littleton, and drummer Gene Jackson, may be less star-studded than formerly, but as long as everyone stays unplugged we can all rest easy. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The sparkling **BOBBY SHORT** presides in the Café Carlyle through Dec. 31. On Mondays, **WOODY ALLEN** plays with the **EDDY DAVIS NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** has settled in for a stay that will take her through New Year's.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—A big man with lungs to match, **KEVIN MAHOGANY** (through Nov. 30) shouts blues, croons ballads, scats bebop, and does everything else a jazz singer has to do to qualify as well rounded in the late twentieth century. Having found the right mixture of self-possession and friskiness, he's kicking some life into a moribund art. Mondays belong to electric-guitar pioneer **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—A new jazz establishment features some new jazz hopefuls. Saxophonist **VINCENT HERRING** (through Nov. 30) may have a Cannonball Adderley obsession, but lately he's been asserting his own highly charged personality.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Through Nov. 30: Keep your eye on saxophonist and composer **HENRY THREADGILL**; he lives to surprise you. Make a Move, his latest unconventional ensemble, is sure to confound and delight. Call it jazz if you like, but categories are the last thing on Threadgill's mind.

Maxim's, 680 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (751-5111)—A mock-nineteenth-century bistro with stained glass, bevelled mirrors, and inlaid ceilings. The graceful, unassuming **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY** (you've heard "The Nanny") is in on Dec. 2 with a Christmas show. Dining.

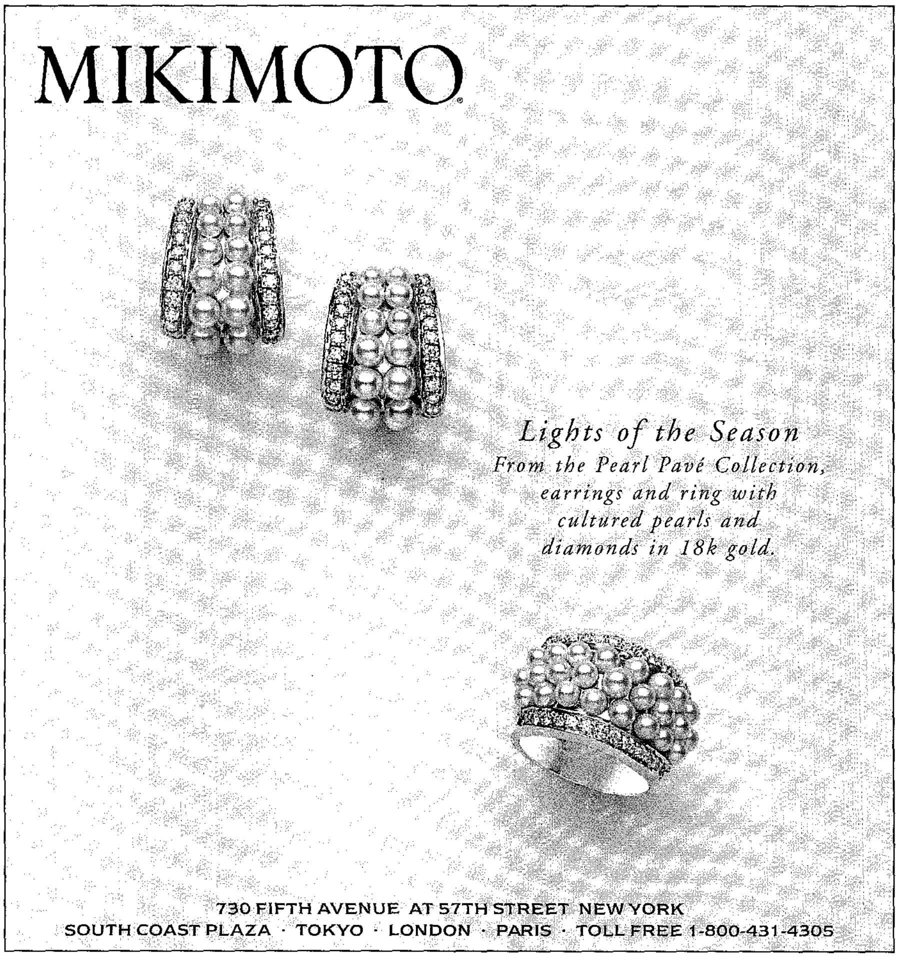
Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Dec. 6: **"LOUNGEVILLE, VOLUME I . . . MUSIC TO WATCH GIRLS BY."** When Ray Coniff becomes a cultural icon, you know fin-de-siècle madness has set in. What better place to give in and accept lounge music as the official soundtrack to the upcoming millennium than a swank club where you can scan the city's many boulevards of broken dreams to the strains of Coniff, Bacharach, Mancini, and Barry (John, not Manilow)? Ellen Foley, Linda Hart, Jessica Molaskey, and Richard Muenz are the stars; musical director Joe McGinty, of Loser's Lounge fame, leads the band.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. The **ZAID NASSER** quintet comes in Nov. 28-29. Stocked to the gills with exciting players, the **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Nov. 30: The **VICTOR LEWIS** quintet. Drummers don't come any sharper than Lewis: as subtle as he is incisive, with a rhythmic kick akin to a low-level hurricane, he plays his instrument as if it were a piano, extracting shades of color from all over his kit. He's also a canny composer and a more than capable bandleader. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A group called simply **TRIO** is in through Nov. 30. **JOSHUA REDMAN** isn't the first tenor saxophonist to head into the Vanguard with just a bassist and a drummer—Sonny Rollins and Joe Henderson were there before him. And with those spirits haunting the bandstand, it's no wonder that Redman is fortifying himself with the ace rhythm team of **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** and **BRIAN BLADE.** Redman obviously relishes a challenge, and he's setting himself up for a doozy here. Starting Dec. 2: The **JOE LOVANO** quartet. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—There's stiff competition out there, but pianist **ANTHONY WONSEY** (Nov. 26-29), an increasingly assured soloist with Christian McBride's band, is primed for the long haul.



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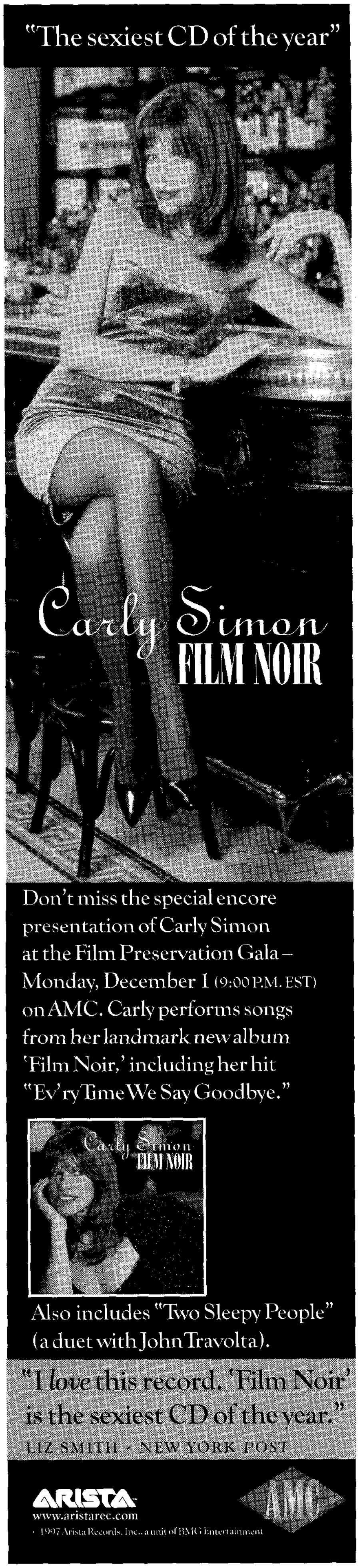
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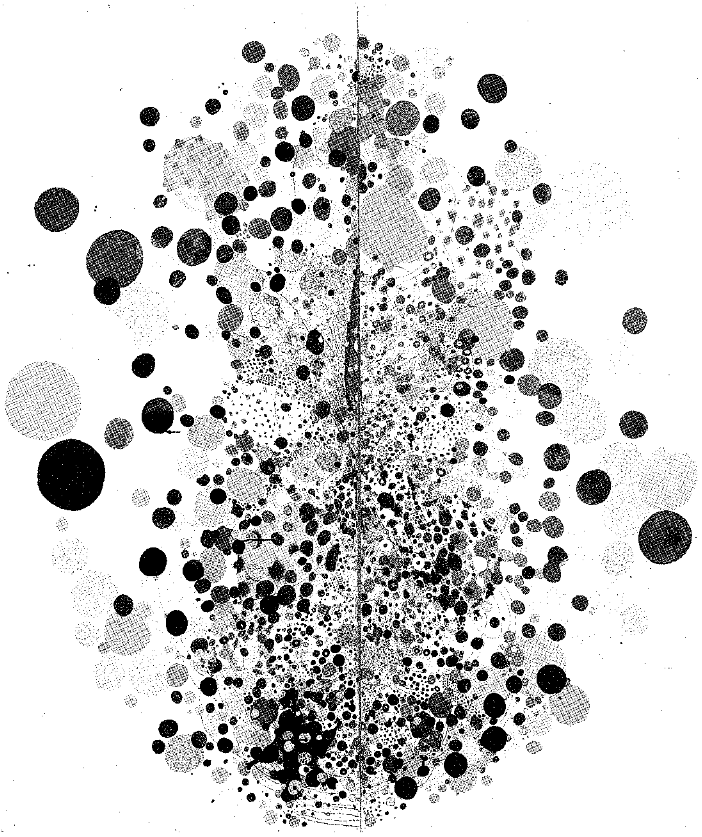
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

(All the institutions listed will be closed Thanksgiving Day.)

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle." An exquisite show of mostly small pen-and-ink, metal-point, and charcoal drawings, heightened by white gouache, on prepared papers of gorgeous hues: rust, salmon pink, blue-gray. The majority are by Filippino himself, the offspring of the prodigiously talented and lustful Carmelite monk Fra Filippo Lippi and a novice named Lucrezia Buti, whom, according to Vasari, he abducted. The father's sensuousness is discernible in the son's gestural sketches, nudes, pietàs, and allegories, and in the work of the son's contemporaries as well—there's a lovely rendering of arms and hands by Raffaelino del Garbo. Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Thirty-odd paintings by the late Abstract Expressionist. (See also the Uptown and Photography Short Lists.) Through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ "King of the World: A Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle" and "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era," two exhibitions celebrating Indian art. Through Feb. 8 and March 1, respectively. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)


"1,200 Eggs," by Nina Bovasso (Clementine).

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." More than a hundred and fifty oils, gouaches, watercolors, and sketches by the master draftsman, who, despite his death at twenty-eight from the Spanish flu, made defining contributions to Expressionist and erotic art. (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "On the Edge: Contemporary Art from the Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ "New Photography 13" features work by Rineke Dijkstra, An-My Lê, Vik Muniz, and Kunié Sugiura. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Achille Castiglioni: Design!" Cutlery, spotlights, floor lamps, tractor seats, and other graceful items from the witty Italian designer. Through Jan. 6. . . . ¶ "Mexican Video: Thorn of the Mountain," an exhibition of independent videos by *montañeros*, campesinos, and citizens of Mexico City. Through Dec. 7. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective" offers more than four hundred pieces from nearly half a century of work. At both Guggenheim venues, through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—The museum's Rauschenberg retrospective continues here. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Richard Diebenkorn retrospective, through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." An investigation into the wigged one's fascination with fashion, which intersperses examples of his art with personal memorabilia (a suit bought in Hong Kong in 1956), re-creations of fifties window displays, videos of Factory-era celebs prepping themselves for interviews, *Interview* covers, and so on. Through Jan. 18. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures that later harden into diamond pipes (re-created here in a simulated mine tunnel) to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. . . . ¶ "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897-1902" commemorates the museum's five-year Jesup expedition, organized by Franz Boas, one of the first anthropological ventures to supplement field observation with photography and recordings. Through March 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

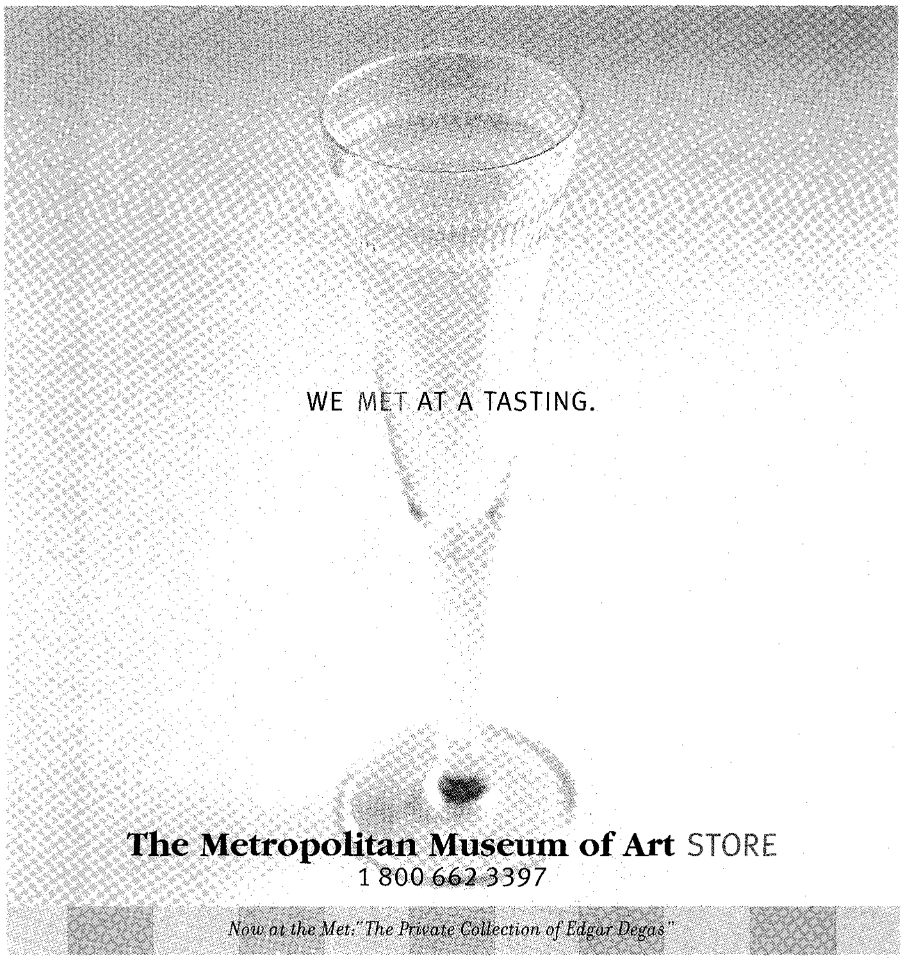
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Monet and the Mediterranean" is an exquisite exhibition that shows the artist both on the brink of discovering the "serial procedure" that would become his signature and after having mastered it. The gardens and seascapes of Antibes radiate a delightful freshness; the opulence of the paintings of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Dario aflame in dying light is dazzling. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "The Furniture of George Hunzinger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth Century America." Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Friday, Nov. 28, until 8; Saturdays, 10 to 9; and Sundays, 10 to 7.)

ONLY CONNECT

gURL (http://www.gurl.com/)—As frank as Madeleine Albright's assessment of Saddam Hussein and as saucy as women's-room graffiti in a college dorm, gURL was created for "girls 14 and up" and anywhere shy of thirty. While the editors deal in earnest with issues of looks and sexuality, the packaging and the content of each section is much more easygoing (and more fun) than you're led to expect. Deal with It, for instance, although described as a section for "getting through the day, the date, and the rest of the hard stuff," includes Read 'Em and Weep, a list of depressing books to read when you're depressed (Sylvia Plath and Jean Rhys, sure, but how about a nice dose of Dostoyevsky or Baudelaire for really blue days?) compiled by Professor Why-Me? And there's the straight-shooting advice column, Help Me Heather; when Heather feels herself at sea on questions regarding sex, shyness, and size (height, that is), she says so, then consults her "experts"—girls she knows who have similar problems. gURL's structure (and its language) is similar to some of the print magazines devoted to young womanhood, but its attitude is feistier. The Looks Aren't Everything department, for instance, contains The Boob Files, an outlet for complaints about breast size and significance, while Paper Doll Psychology lets you assemble a model's outfit, then gives a pop-psych analysis of your choices. The site, which favors the first person throughout, definitely speaks to its readers, and vice versa: a gallery called Exhibitionist showcases postings submitted by high-school girls who live far from Manhattan (gURL's home), and Where Do I Go from Here ("Some different ways of getting a life") has issued a call for stories from college freshwomen. In the end, gURL makes the personal political without being polemical.

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966-96" presents the work of fifty-one British nationals who offer diverse versions of the culture of their homeland. The exhibition extends to the Studio Museum in Harlem (144 W. 125th St., 864-4500) and the Caribbean Cultural Center (408 W. 58th St., 307-7420) and continues through March 15 at all three venues. (Open Wednesdays, 3 to 9; Thursdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Fifty Years of Fashion: New Look to Now," a chronological exhibition that includes Christian Dior's 1947 New Look fashions; Chanel, Courrèges, Balenciaga, and other fifties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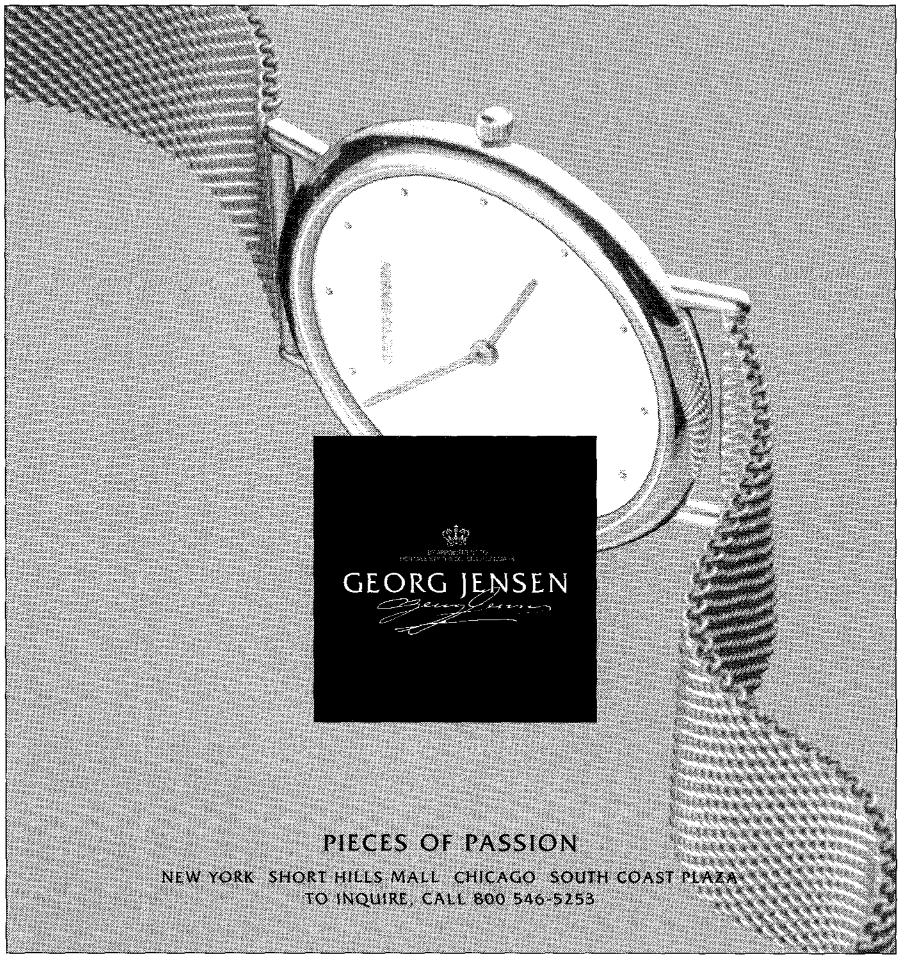
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haute couture; sixties youthquake looks; seventies hot pants and platform shoes; eighties spandex; and the most recent fads—retro, ethno, techno, boho, and go-go. Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. (873-3400)—"Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Lights of Times Square" surveys midtown pyrotechnics from the earliest days of incandescence (multi-bulb Wrigley's "spearmen" frolicking on a block-long pack of gum) through the heyday of neon and steam (Planters peanuts' leguminous cascade, Camel cigarettes' ten-foot smoke rings) to current L.E.D. computer technology. Through March 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books" harks back to the days of czars and the illuminated books that were every bit as lavish as their more notorious hoards of art and jewelry. Salomon Room; through Feb. 28. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City. (718-784-2084)—The school for scandal has reopened, with a re-creation of "Rooms," the museum's inaugural group show from 1976, and one-person exhibitions from the late filmmaker Jack Smith, photographers John Coplans and Martin von Haselberg, and sculptors Jackie Winsor and Lynne Yamamoto. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will all be closed Thanksgiving Day.)

Milton Avery (1885-1965)—Paintings and works on paper, mostly from the forties and fifties. Avery has often been characterized as the American Matisse, and, while he lacks the inventiveness and verve of the French master, his brilliant palette and his penchant for *bonheur de vivre* subject matter justify the comparison. "Relaxed Nude" (1948) looks like a direct descendant of Matisse's odalisques, although the subject's no-nonsense coiffure suggests she might be more at home in the suburbs than in a harem. Through Dec. 6. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

Rudy Burckhardt / Joe Brainard—Burckhardt's homely paintings of the Maine woods have a muted loveliness that leads perfectly into the magical realm of Brainard's work: an irresistible collection of postcard-size collages from the seventies which testify to the artist's delight in the everyday. Both shows through Nov. 29. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

Julie Heffernan—Self-portraits and still-lifes, whose convincing stylistic nods (e.g., to the infantas of Velázquez and the landscapes of Fantin-Latour) are lightened by paintings within paintings: mini dreamscapes (elephants disappearing down a hole in a McDonald's parking lot) and noirish film scenes in alternate palettes. Despite the flea-market assortment of styles, there's none of the ironic dissociation of David Salle here: Heffernan's panels are fizzy and theatrical, and her layers of blatant artifice somehow add up to a single dreamy narrative. Through Dec. 17. (Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323.)

Piet Mondrian and Ad Reinhardt—Viewing this intelligent selection of the two painters' works side by side enhances our understanding of both sensibilities: familiar canvases look suddenly new again, and Reinhardt's stunning black paintings in particular appear more serene and lush, more "absolute," than ever. Through Dec. 13. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

Nicolas de Staël (1914-55)—Late paintings and works on paper by a French artist (actually, a Russian emigré orphan transplanted to France) who worked in both abstract and representational styles. Perhaps the renascence of interest in postwar European abstraction will encourage a revival of his once considerable reputation here: this is his first New York exhibition in more than thirty years. Many of the pictures are characterized by thickly painted, clotted surfaces. (He certainly knew how to use a palette knife.) They are also suffused with dreariness. Through Dec. 13. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400.)

Pat Steir—"Wind Water Stone," recent paintings in which Steir continues to explore the expressive possibilities of the drip. The pictures are wholly abstract, but, as the title of the show suggests, they are richly evocative of atmospheric conditions. Through Nov. 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

"The Artist's World"—A gallimaufry of paintings about artists, their families, their studios, their masked balls and rendezvous, their sun-dappled sheds, and so on. With examples by Courbet, Ingres, Fairfield Porter, Diebenkorn, and many others. Through Jan. 3. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

Short List—**BEATTIE & DAVIDSON,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Nov. 29. . . . **PIERRE BONNARD,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through Dec. 13. . . . **ALAN DAVIE,** Rickards, 1045 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 924-0858. Through Dec. 13. . . . **BURGOYNE DILLER,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Through Jan. 17. . . . **YVES KLEIN,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Nov. 29. . . . **FRANZ KLINE,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through Jan. 17. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 3. . . . **GEORGE LUKS,** Owen, 19 E. 75th St. 879-2415. Through Dec. 15. . . . **DOUGLAS OSA,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Dec. 30. . . . **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through Nov. 29. . . . **MAN RAY,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124. Through Dec. 20. . . . **JOHN SINGER SARGENT,** Adelson, 25 E. 77th St. 439-6800. Through Dec. 13. . . . **EGON SCHIELE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through Jan. 3. . . . **CY TWOMBLY,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313. Through Dec. 20. . . . **ROBERT WEINSTOCK,** Giampietro, 25 E. 73rd St. 861-8571. Through Dec. 6.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Matthew Barney—Sculptures and photographs related to the artist's latest film, "Cremaster 5." Through Dec. 20. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Nina Bovasso—Paintings made of bright blobs and wee stickums and watery stains, compounded heroically until they look like marathon phone doodles or clouds of interstellar dust. Very sociable and up-cycle manic-depressive. Through Nov. 29. (Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937.)

Rodney Graham—"Vexation Island," a new film by the Canadian Conceptualist, which features him, dressed in eighteenth-century costume, as a castaway on a desert island, his only companion a rather sardonic-looking parrot. It's beautiful but hard to fathom. (The press release cites Deleuze and Freud, but that's not much help.) Through Dec. 20. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

Group Show—Steel sculptures by Mark di Suvero, Nancy Graves, Beverly Pepper, Judy Pfaff, George Rickey, Jeffrey Rubinoff, and Ann Sperry. Through Dec. 13. (Two Sculptors, 124 W. 18th St. 645-3584.)

Short List—**PAUL BLOODGOOD AND MARY BETH EDELSON,** Art Resources Transfer, 504 W. 22nd St. 691-5956. Through Nov. 30. . . . **JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER,** Morris-Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753. Through Dec. 27. . . . **OLIVER HERRING,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Dec. 6. . . . **ROBERT LONGO,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Jan. 10. . . . **JOAN MITCHELL AND JOHN CHAMBERLAIN,** Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through Jan. 9. . . . **KEHNET NIELSEN,** DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511. Through Dec. 20. . . . **ARLENE RUSH,** Asyl, 547 W. 27th St.

Drawing Shadows to Stone

Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897–1902

Through March 1, 1998

The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, among the most important expeditions in the history of American anthropology, documented the cultures of the indigenous peoples living along both sides of the Bering Strait. Commemorating the expedition's enduring impact, this compelling exhibition features more than 150 haunting turn-of-the-century photographs, rare and unusual artifacts, and extraordinary recordings of traditional folklore. For related programs, films, and lectures, call 212-769-5315.

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"Thieves" (Romania, 1993), by Antonin Kratochvil (SABA).

594-1372. Through Dec. 13. . . . **HUGH STEERS,** Anderson, 453 W. 17th St. 463-0970. Through Jan. 18. . . . **BILL TRAYLOR,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Dec. 24. . . . **TERRY WINTERS,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Opens at noon; through Dec. 24.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Donald Baechler—Huge canvases, in acrylic on collage, of flowers in vases, all of them more or less black on more or less white backgrounds and rendered in the artist's studied-naïve style. Although there's a hip, decorative beauty to these shadowy pictures, and something comical and almost anachronistic in their vainglorious scale, they don't warrant prolonged scrutiny. Through Dec. 6. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.)

Richard Serra—New "drawings," made with melted black oil stick (quantities of it) applied to paper with a mesh utensil and sometimes stepped on by the artist to achieve the right density and texture. The show is entitled "Rounds," and each of the eighteen pictures features a large, almost three-dimensional circular or elliptical mass, variously positioned within a rectangular frame. All have titles ("Paul Celan," "Robert Frank," "Walkin the Dog"), adding a playfully absurdist element to the work. Through Dec. 20. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Shahzia Sikander—Murals and miniatures by the young Pakistani artist. Stock gender-issue phantasmagoria (Little Red Riding-Hood, veiled women, headless nudes with knives) cannot detract from the poetic hermeticism of the miniatures, with their tea-stained borders and dizzying layers of rich pattern and elusive symbolism. Through Dec. 20. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

Christopher Wool—Elegant new paintings, most of them in enamel on aluminum. These are cool, mysterious, and rarefied pictures, seemingly engaged in a quiet and private dialogue among themselves. They are very much about process, and Wool continues his exploration of the tension between painting and mechanical reproduction, utilizing his signature techniques of stencil, silk screen, and spray paint. In one picture, black stencil designs recalling the banality of gift wrap or flocked wallpaper have been applied to a slippery white surface; next to it, a similar painting has been whitewashed over with a roller, leaving a palimpsest of original intent. One of Wool's elliptical word paintings coolly spells out "YOU MAKE ME." Also on view: three works on rice paper which add a new delicacy to the artist's vocabulary. Through Dec. 20. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. 219-9600.)

"Globfling"—Glassworks and video documentation by B Team, the glassblowing performance troupe. Through Dec. 31. (KRT, 416 W. 13th St. 242-2550.)

Short List—**TOM BUTTER,** Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through Dec. 20. . . . **BRYAN CROCKETT,** Fotouhi Cramer, 560 Broadway. 431-1304. Through Jan. 3. . . . **BRENDA GOODMAN,** Steele, 420 West Broadway. 941-8388. Through Nov. 29. . . . **PAULA HAYES,** A/C Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275. Through Jan. 17. . . . **YOSHIKO KANAI,** Ise Art Foundation, 555 Broadway. 925-1649. Through Dec. 20. . . . **TOM KNECHTEL,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through Dec. 20. . . . **BEATRIZ MILHAZES,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880. Through Jan. 10. . . . **MARTIN MULL,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through Dec. 20. . . . **WILLIAM NICHOLS,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. 431-3600. Through Jan. 3. . . . **CARL PALAZZOLO,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Dec. 20. . . . **SUSAN ROTHENBERG,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Dec. 13. . . . **DIANE SAMUELS,** Foster, 62 Crosby St. 966-9024. Through Dec. 20. . . . **JULIAN SCHNABEL,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through Dec. 13. . . . **HAIM STEINBACH,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160. Through Dec. 6.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—An auction of coins, offered in conjunction with Spink's, the numismatic specialists. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. Dec. 2.)

Sotheby's—Nov. 26: Colonial, modern, and contemporary Latin-American art. . . . ¶ Dec. 2: Paperweights. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tom Baril—The artist's latest large-scale works: exquisitely toned and printed pictures of poppies, dahlias, peonies, and columbines. Five atmospheric beachscapes serve to cleanse the palate, as does an atypical view of the Chrysler Building which dwells on all the Deco detail below the famous spire. Through Dec. 6. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

Antonin Kratochvil—"Broken Dream," a striking, subtle twenty-year record of desolation and hope in Eastern Europe. The photographer's use of wide-angle lenses and his predilection for movement and for off-kilter compositions give these pictures a rare and powerful sense of space. Through Dec. 1. (SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

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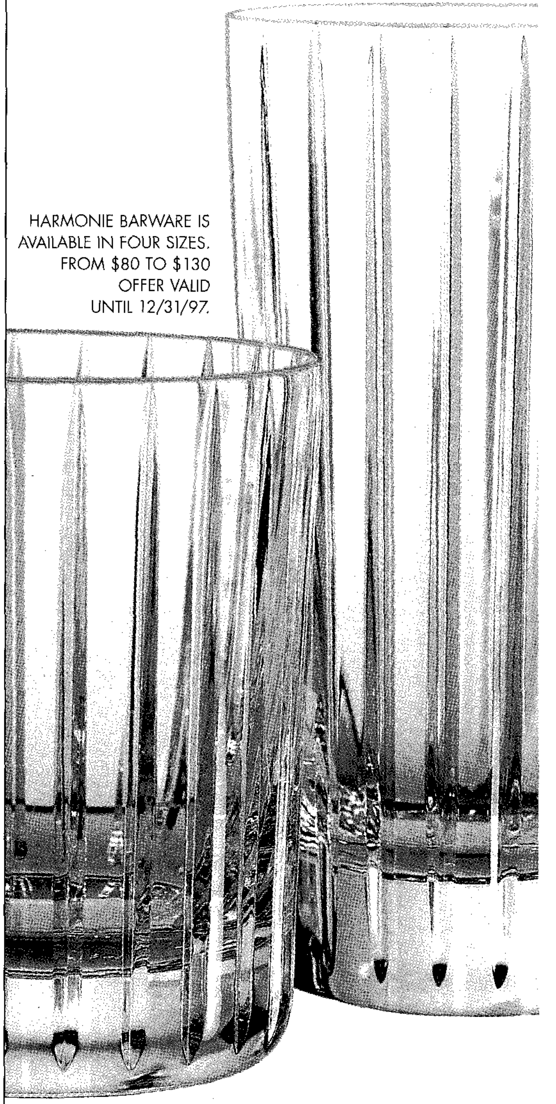

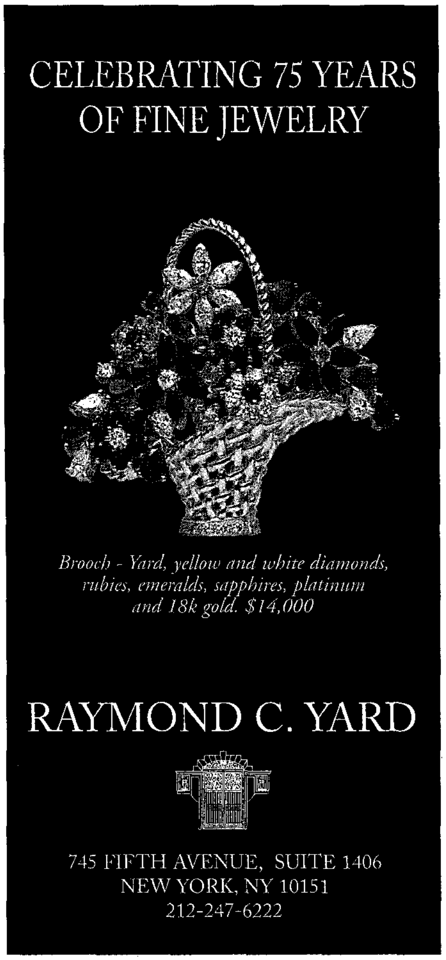

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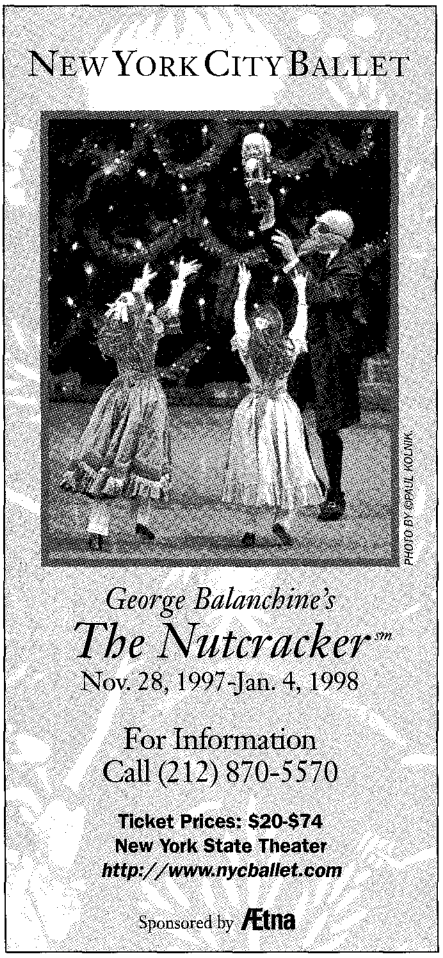

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SUSAN RANKAITIS—"Gold Science Ghost Drawings," a suite of six mixed-medium abstract prints with intriguing surfaces that look like brushed aluminum and rusted iron. Through Dec. 13. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

LARRY TOWELL—The well-travelled photojournalist's black-and-white "Family Album" is a paean to home, in this case a seventy-five-acre farm in Ontario. Most of the images of kids, kittens, the swimming hole, and the front porch feel just right, if a bit safe. But one, "Black Locust Trees," shines brighter than the rest. Setting directly behind a dead, hollow tree, the weak sun illuminates a field and a dusty road; a girl reaches from inside the tree, beckoning to her cat to join her. Through Dec. 13. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"CONSTRUCTIVISM IN RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, 1923 TO 1936"—Vintage works by such luminaries as Alexander Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, and Georgi Zelma. Through Dec. 13. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

"PARIS, CITY OF LIGHT"—The city as muse, in the photographs of Todd Webb, Bruce Cratsley, and André Kertész. Through Jan. 3. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"SCENE FROM BEHIND"—A playful group of images that, in one way or another, depict a posterior view. Among the artists are Helen Levitt, Lauren Greenfield, Louis Faurer, Lee Friedlander, and Leon Levinstein. Through Jan. 10. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Open Sundays, noon to 5.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through Feb. 22. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**ERWIN BLUMENFELD** and **ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ**, Danziger, 130 Prince St. 226-0056. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **FRANTIŠEK DRTIKOL** and **RICHARD GERE**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **LEE FRIEDLANDER**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Dec. 31. . . . **SEIICHI FURUYA**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through Jan. 3. . . . **ANDREAS GURSKY**, Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Dec. 24. . . . **IMRE KINSZKI**, Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Dec. 6. . . . **HIROJI KUBOTA**, Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. 554-4818. Open Mondays; through Jan. 3. . . . **BUILDER LEVY**, Klapper Hall, Queens College, Kissena Blvd. and Melbourne Ave., Flushing. 718-997-4747. Through Dec. 19. . . . **DANNY LYON**, Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 18. . . . **JOHN MONTEITH**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Dec. 24. . . . **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART**, Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through Dec. 20. . . . **FRED STEIN** and **PETER LOEWY**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Both shows through Jan. 3. . . . **KUNIÉ SUGIURA**, Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450. Through Jan. 10. . . . **SHELLBURNE THURBER**, Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through Dec. 20. . . . **NICK WAPLINGTON**, Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through Dec. 20.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

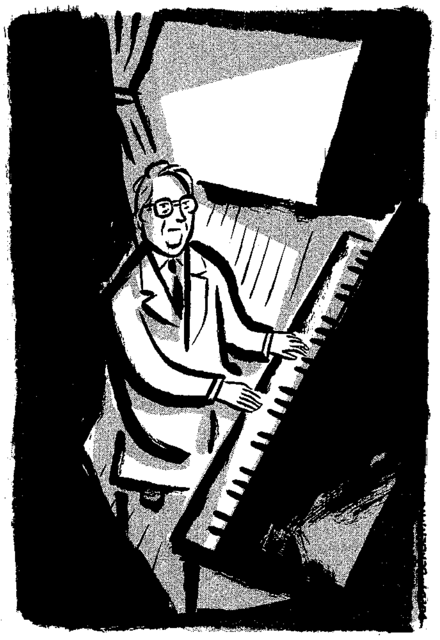
(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LA CLEMENZA DI TITO**, with Carol Vaness, Heidi Grant Murphy, Anne Sofie von Otter, Angelika Kirchschlager, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and John Cheek; conducted by James Levine. (Nov. 26 at 7:30 and Nov. 29 at 8.) . . . **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS**, by Stravinsky, with Dawn Upshaw, Denyce Graves, Jerry Hadley, and Samuel Ramey; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 28 and Dec. 1 at 8.) . . . **TANNHÄUSER**, with Mechthild Gessendorf, Jeannine Altmeyer, Ms. Upshaw, Wolfgang Schmidt, Bryn Terfel, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Paul Nadler. (Nov. 29 at 12:30.) . . . **TURANDOT**, with Sharon Sweet, Ruth Ann Swenson, Richard Margison, and Hao Jiang Tian; Nello Santi. (Dec. 2 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NOVAYA OPERA THEATRE—The Moscow-based company presents "Eugene Onegin." (Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 8, Nov. 29 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 30 at 2 and 7. For information about tickets, call 239-6200.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Opening performances of "Die Fledermaus." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 29 at 7:30 and Nov. 30 at 2:30. Through Jan. 4.)



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NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Zdenek Macal conducts Smetana's "Šárka" (from the symphonic cycle "Má Vlast"), Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 482, with Emanuel Ax), and Schumann's Symphony No. 3 (the "Rhenish"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 26, Nov. 28-29, and Dec. 1, all at 8, and Dec. 2 at 7:30.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Gerard Schwarz conducts the première of Theodore Shapiro's "Of Blood and Carnations," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Horacio Gutiérrez), two works by David Diamond ("Night Thoughts" and "A Lilac Festival Overture"), and Saint-Saëns's Symphony No. 2. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 5.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA—John Rutter directs excerpts from Handel's "Messiah," with the AOL Chorus, which is being billed as "the world's first cyber-chorus"; the singers—from twenty-five states—are rehearsing in a series of real-time on-line sessions. Food for thought. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 30 at 2.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Leon Botstein directs music for chorus and orchestra by Brahms: his "Triumphlied" (from 1871, inspired by the unification of Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm I), nine of the "Liebeslieder" Waltzes (in his orchestrated versions), and the dramatic cantata "Rinaldo" (to a libretto by Goethe). Soprano Susan Gonzalez, mezzo-soprano Amy Anderson, tenors Vinson Cole and William Hite, baritone Timothy LeFebvre, and the New York Choral Artists round out the performing roster. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 30 at 3.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC—Oboist Gerard Reuter and pianist Richard Rodney Bennett perform Poulenc's valedictory Oboe Sonata, Benjamin Godard's

"Scènes Écossaises," and Mr. Bennett's "After Syrinx I"; cabaret star Mary Cleere Haran is partnered by Mr. Bennett in songs by Rodgers and Hart. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Nov. 27 at 7:30 and Nov. 30 at 4.)

Ensemble for Early Music—The group presents Renaissance works on geographical themes, such as Isaac's "Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen" and Verdelot's "Italia Mia." (St. James Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Nov. 28-29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

"Vera . . . Life of a Diva"—A diva whose life is a drag, that is, since the eponymous star, Vera Galupe-Borszkh, is the alter ego of Ira Siff, founder of the opera troupe *en travesti* La Gran Scena (which joins in for these performances). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 28-29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 7.)

Bi-Borough Trios—Violinist Lara St. John, cellist Maria Kitsopoulos, and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform piano trios by Brahms (in C Minor) and Mr. Rechtman. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Nov. 30 at noon. . . . ¶ Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 30 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—The instrumental group offers an all-Bach program, comprising his E-Major Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, D-Minor Concerto for Two Violins, and Orchestral Suites No. 1 and No. 2 (the latter featuring flutist Elizabeth Mann). (Cantor Auditorium, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway. Nov. 30 at 2. For information about tickets, call 212-840-7470. . . . ¶ Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 3 at 8.)

Weimar String Quartet—The most famous comment on the subject of quartet-playing came from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the Sage of Weimar: "You listen to four sensible persons conversing, you profit from their discourse, and you get to know the peculiar properties of their several instruments." This ensemble takes its name not from the city but rather from its husband-and-wife violinists, Peter-Martin Weimar and Heidi Modr-Weimar. (Violist Tamaki Higachi and cellist Garo Yellin complete the foursome.) In this concert they perform quartets by Mozart (in D Major, K. 285), Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4), and Schubert (in D Minor, "Death and the Maiden"). (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. Nov. 30 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

Dinner Opera—The Sunday-night musical dinners at the Algonquin Hotel continue with a program of Italian favorites, featuring soprano Madeleine Bender, mezzo-soprano Wendy Hoffman, tenor Jay Hunter Morris, bass Peter Volpe, and pianist Earl Buys. (59 W. 44th St. 840-6800. Nov. 30, with dinner at 6:30, and music following at about 8.)

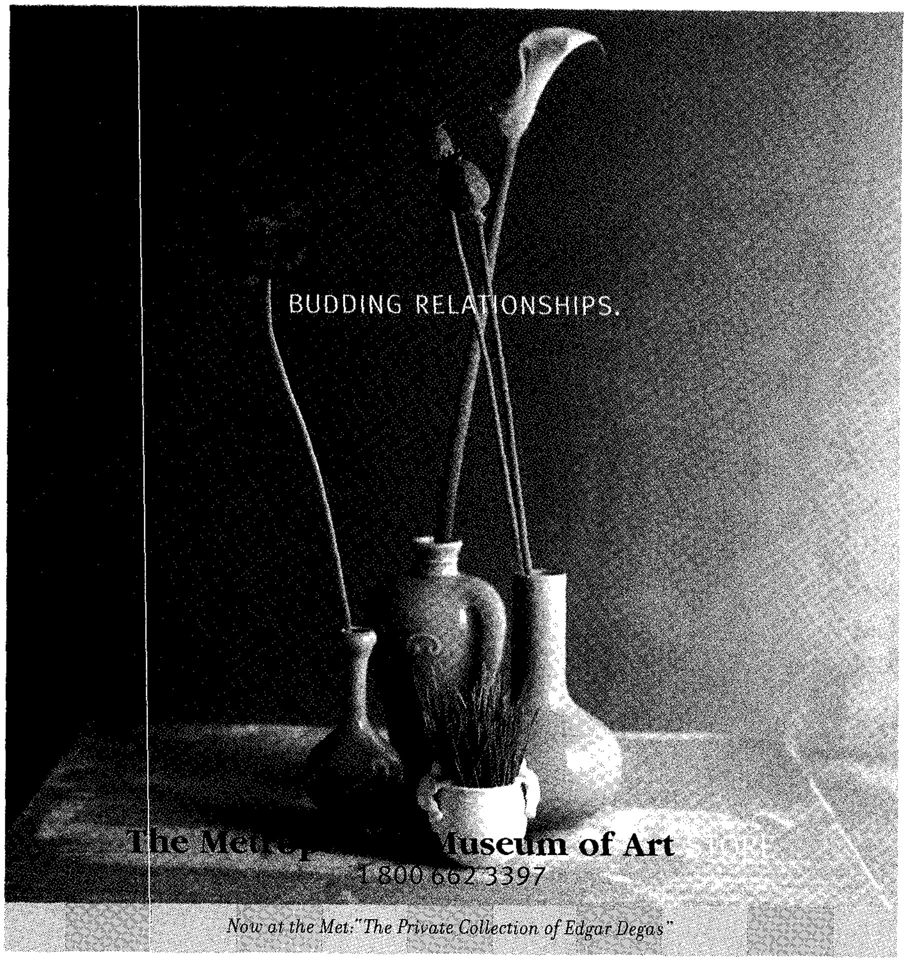
Igor Begelman and Friends—The clarinettist is joined by violist Natasha Lipkina and pianist Inga Kapuler for Mozart's "Kegelstatt" Trio, Bartók's "Contrasts," and Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat." (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. Dec. 1 at noon. Admission by contribution.)

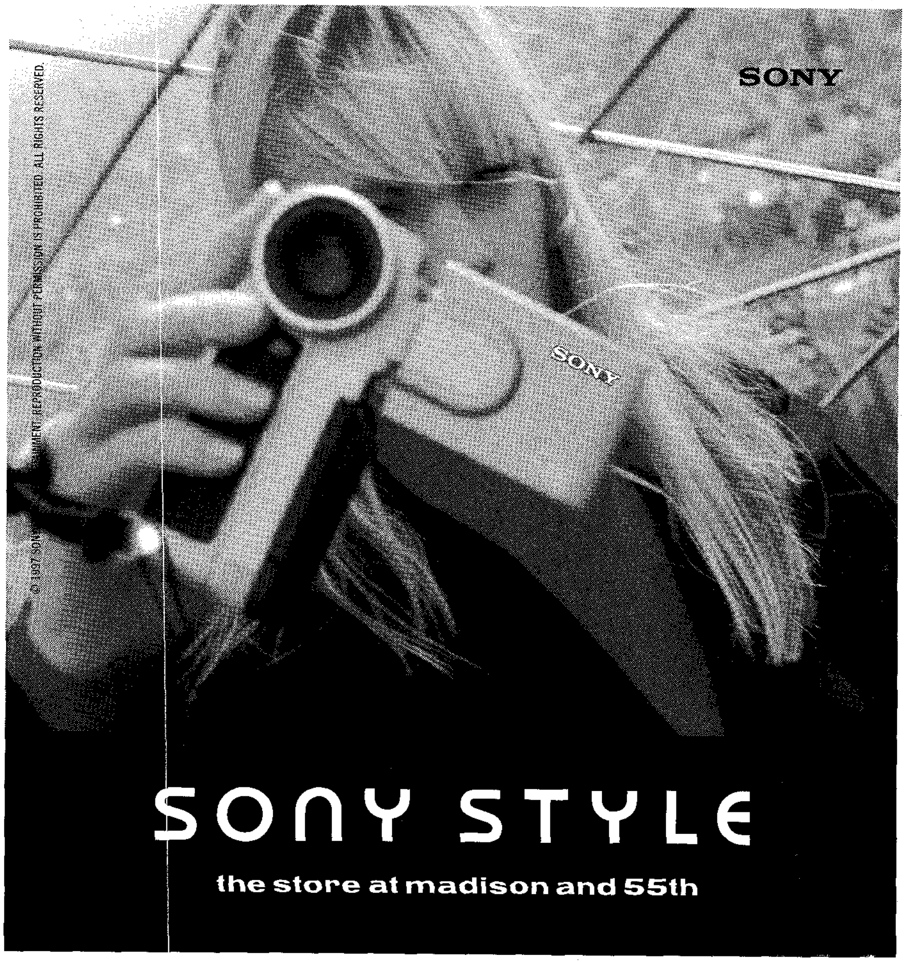
Concert for La Fenice—A benefit concert to raise money for the rebuilding of the Venetian opera house, with sopranos Ruth Ann Swenson and Carol Vaness, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore, tenors Paul Groves and Luis Lima, baritones Thomas Hampson and Manfred Hemm, bass James Morris, pop star Elton John, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Collegiate Chorale. Eduardo Müller and Robert Bass conduct, and Regina Resnik serves as m.c. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 1 at 7.)

New York Grand Opera—Presenting a wide-ranging vocal recital. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 1 at 7:30. A benefit concert.)

"Jean Sibelius"—A film by Christopher Nupen, being screened as the first event in Lincoln Center's Sibelius festival. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. 721-6500. Dec. 1 at 7:30.)

Clarion Music Society—Frederick Hammond leads Roman Baroque Christmas music. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 1 at 8.)

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Washington Square Contemporary Music Society—Works by seven living composers. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Yigal Kesselman—Performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Sonata No. 2 and Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 6. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Dec. 1 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Robert Helps—Pianist, performing three of his own works (including the newly completed "Shall We Dance"), as well as pieces by Christopher Berg and David Del Tredici (a première). (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Dec. 1-2 at 8.)

Music by William Bolcom—Few modern works have provided as much enjoyment as the two volumes of Bolcom's "Cabaret Songs," premièred in 1985—and it's hard to think of any other modern pieces that have entered the must-sing repertoire so rapidly. In this concert, he (at the piano) and mezzo-soprano Joan Morris (his wife, and an inimitable interpreter of classic American popular song) unveil two further volumes. Like the earlier sets, these are to texts by the poet Arnold Weinstein. Also on the program are two more song groups by Bolcom, performed by soprano Benita Valente and pianist Cynthia Raim: "Briefly It Enters" (to texts by Jane Kenyon) and "Let Evening Come" (to poems by Ms. Kenyon, Maya Angelou, and Emily Dickinson, with Samuel Rhodes playing an obbligato viola part). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 2 at 8.)

Todd Seelye—Guitarist, performing works by Davidovsky, Takemitsu, Mel Powell, Brian Ferneyhough, Shirish Korde, and Ketty Nez. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 2 at 8.)

"The Slavic Soul"—Piano works, songs, and chamber pieces by Martinů, Szymanowski, Janáček, and Rachmaninoff, performed by soprano Oksana Krovytska, violinist Scott St. John, and pianists Zaidee Parkinson and Pei-Yao Wang. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 2 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Chère Maître"—Actors Irene Worth and Peter Eyre portray the nineteenth-century novelists George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, in a dramatic reading of the writers' correspondence adapted and directed by Eyre. The evening promises to be full of "the power of the word," as Worth told the *Daily Telegraph* before performing the piece onstage in London, in 1996. "When you crack a word open, it evokes all kinds of emotions in the listener," she added. "Our two friends, Gustave and George, they loved the word. They're braver, more candid, than other people who may be afraid of putting their deepest thoughts on paper." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 1 at 8.)

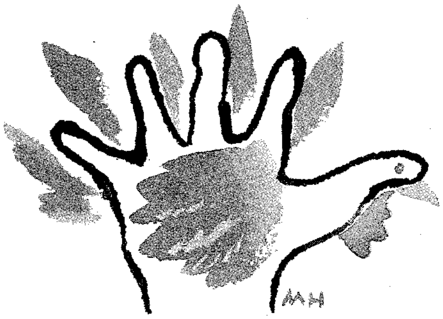
Readings—Nov. 29 at 7:30: By newcomers and regulars at Stowell & Sons Booksellers, from the works of the poet Pablo Neruda. (33-18 Broadway, Astoria. No tickets necessary, but those interested in reading should call 718-204-5775 to register.) . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 6: By Gini Alhadeff, from her memoir "The Sun at Midday." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 7:30: By humorist David Sedaris, from his collection "Holidays on Ice." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Dec. 1 at 7: Miles Barth, curator at the International Center of Photography, leads a discussion about the work and life of the photographer Weegee, with critic Max Kozloff, photographer Joel Meyerowitz, and *American Photo* editor Carol Squiers. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777, ext. 156.) . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 8:30: Alan Kay, a former fellow at Apple Computer who is now a member of the Walt Disney Company's Imagineering Department, speculates on the future, in a lecture titled "The Computer Revolution Hasn't Happened Yet." (Jewish Theological Seminary, Broadway at 122nd St. 678-8996.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Drawing on History

SCHOOLCHILDREN learn about the first Thanksgiving by making drawings of turkeys from tracings of their hands, and by listening to the tale of how the Pilgrims shared a feast with the native Wampanoag tribe. There's more to it than that, of course. John Demos, a professor of history at Yale, says that he "would like to see Thanksgiving as a small and specific instance of a very big theme in early American history: namely, exchange and encounter across the cultural divide between native peoples and colonists." Demos's 1994 book, **The Unredeemed Captive** (Knopf), tells the story of a young girl who was abducted by Mohawks from her home in Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704, and chose not to return to her family.



Demos sees Tzvetan Todorov's **The Conquest of America** (Peter Smith), which is mainly about the Spaniards' exploration of the New World, as a foundation for examining the theme of "cultural and personal difference." He also admires James H. Merrell's **The Indians' New World** (Norton), which describes how the arrival of the colonists changed the lives of Native Americans, and Edmund S. Morgan's **American Slavery, American Freedom** (Norton), which stresses how both Native Americans and, after the introduction of slavery, Africans changed the colonists' way of life.

Sometimes novelists have the freedom to mine territory historians can't. Demos cites Brian Moore's **Black Robe** (Plume), which explores the often tense relationship between the Jesuits and the native tribes of Québec without discounting the humanity of the latter, and he points out that Moore ventured "beyond and outside the actual surviving documents to suggest what was going on at the deepest levels."

The thing that makes history exciting—the discovery of interconnected stories that run deep in a culture but also fan out across it like an explosion of stars—can make it intimidating as well. Thinking about history on a human scale is perhaps the best way to prevent it from overwhelming us. Maybe the traced outline of a hand, even one poorly disguised as a turkey, isn't such a bad place to start.

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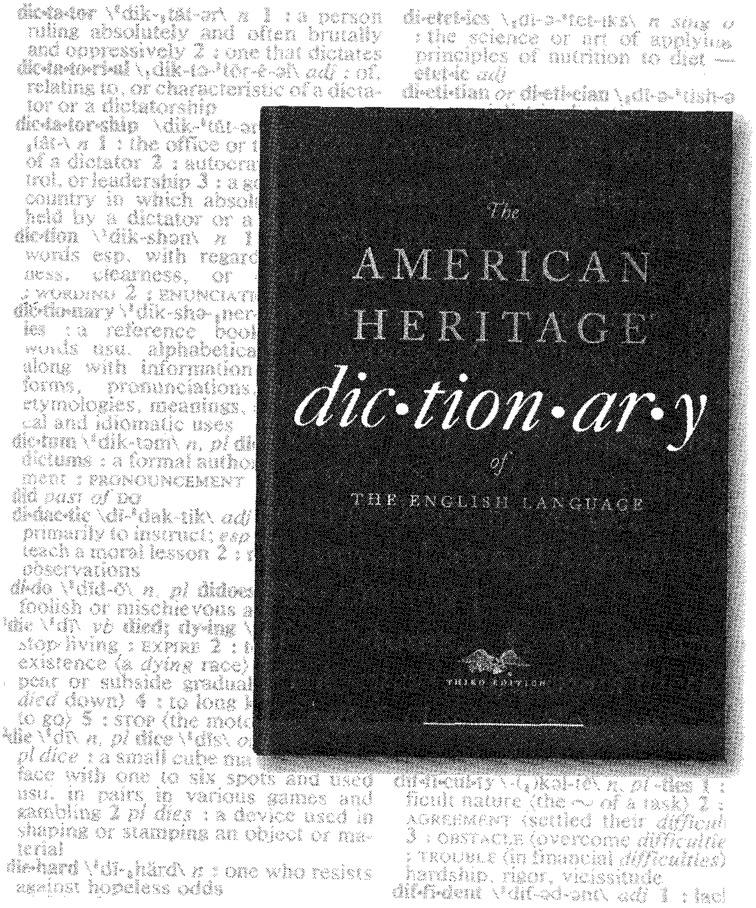

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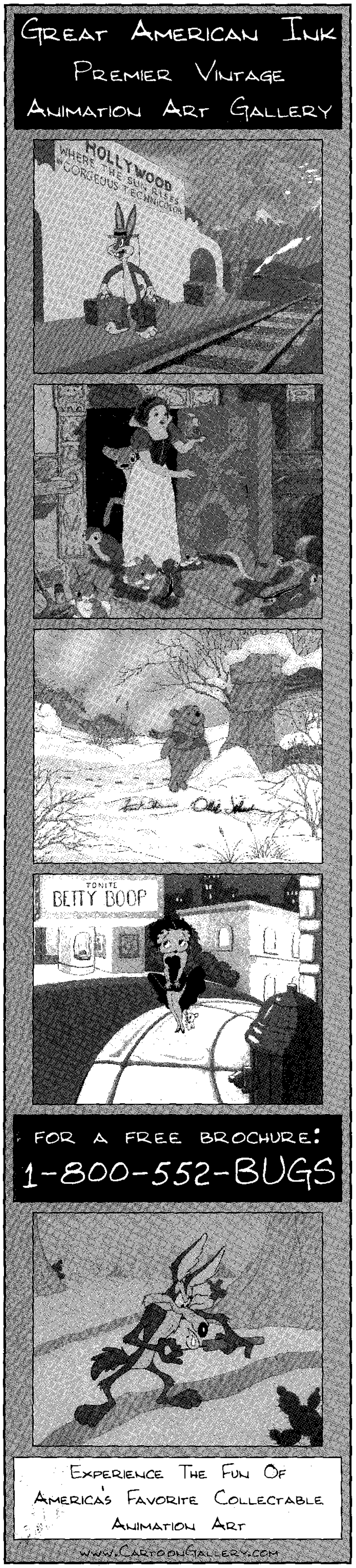
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THE MOVIES

OPENING THIS WEEK

Alien Resurrection—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 26. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Bang—A young woman masquerades as a motorcycle cop, in the début feature by the writer-director Ash. Opening Nov. 21. (Quad Cinema.)

Bent—Martin Sherman's 1979 drama about gay men during the Holocaust, adapted by the playwright and directed by Sean Mathias. With Clive Owen, Lothaire Bluteau, and Brian Webber. Opening Nov. 26. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Flubber—Robin Williams plays a college professor who discovers a substance with remarkable properties, in a remake of the 1961 comedy "The Absent-Minded Professor." Directed by Les Mayfield. Opening Nov. 26. (Chelsea West, Guild, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Welcome to Sarajevo—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 26. (Angelika Film Center.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Anastasia—Director Don Bluth has made quite a few animated films ("An American Tail," "The Land Before Time") since leaving Disney in the early eighties, but none as opulent or as artistically successful as this Twentieth Century Fox cartoon musical. The Anastasia story—Nicholas II's youngest daughter escapes assassination during the Russian Revolution—has been simplified and Cinderella-ized: a lost girl must discover the princess inside her. But Bluth's breathtaking wide-screen work and his exquisite painted backgrounds (they echo "Doctor Zhivago") lend a majesty and a lyricism that give the drama emotional weight. The film doesn't burst through any of the genre's limitations; the Broadway-style numbers still sound old-fashioned (a good Babyface tune wouldn't have hurt), and the cute little sidekicks still get the wisecracks. But it's all presented at an entertaining clip, and viewers who manage to leave the hype at the door can have some fun. Co-directed by Gary Goldman.—*Bruce Diones* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Bean—Rowan Atkinson's twitching, ear-wiggling screwball character comes to Los Angeles, where, posing as a scholarly art expert, he is to preside over the unveiling of Whistler's portrait of his mother. After causing hilarious damage all around, including sneezing on the painter's grim-faced mom, he comes up with an ingenious art-restoration plan involving egg yolks, chewing gum, and the miracle of gift-shop posters. When Atkinson isn't waddling like a penguin or braying like a donkey, his comic gift does appear to have human influences—touches of Buster Keaton, Jacques Tati, Dick Van Dyke, and Pee-wee Herman. There may be one bathroom joke too many for non-Brits, but the conceit at the heart of the witty script—that the bowings and scrapings of academic and social prestige are nothing more than the child's play of adults—should appeal to grownups everywhere. Directed by Mel Smith.—*Daphne Merkin* (11/24/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Conversation Piece (1977)—The theme is "Death in Venice" all over again, with Burt Lancaster playing Aschenbach to Helmut Berger's Konrad (a garish, grown-up Tadzio). But the director, Luchino Visconti, is in a jovial mood, and the dignified older man isn't destroyed; on the contrary, he is recalled to life. Visconti pictures have often had an undercurrent of silliness, and in this one the silliness is very close to the surface; however, there's grandeur in the director's follies and in his allowing his sexual and political obsessions to be displayed so openly. It's an idiosyncratic film, it's cuckoo—an old man's film (partly directed from a wheelchair)—but it's very likable. With Silvana Mangano and, in brief appearances, Dominique Sanda and Claudia Cardinale. In Italian.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 30.)

Eve's Bayou—For her first film, the writer and director Kasi Lemmons attempts to adapt Tennessee Williams's Southern-gothic style to an African-American context. Eve, the heroine (Jurnee Smollett), a ten-year-old bourgeois Creole in late-fifties rural Louisiana, is trying to understand why her mother (an intense, elegant Lynn Whitfield) is so frigid and why her beloved father (a subdued Samuel L. Jackson) is addicted to fooling around. As long as the film sticks to Eve's point of view it's got a naïve charm; unfortunately, Lemmons mixes in Magic Realist fantasies of African voodoo and black-and-white sequences that feel less poetic than arty.—*Sarah Kerr* (Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

How I Spent My Summer Vacation—A sweet, slightly derivative comic look at dating among African-Americans, starring RonReaco Lee and Deanna Davis as a couple of college students who love each other but fight constantly. The young writer and director, John Fisher, is not as distinctive a talent as Woody Allen or Spike Lee, two filmmakers who have obviously influenced his quips about the war between the sexes. On the plus side, Fisher's jokes are tender, generous, and refreshingly free of his forebears' misogyny and self-love. And he has put together a likable Atlanta-based cast. RonReaco Lee, as the immature and still selfish hero, is especially promising—a handsome actor who's not above playing the buffoon.—*S.K.* (Film Forum; through Dec. 2.)

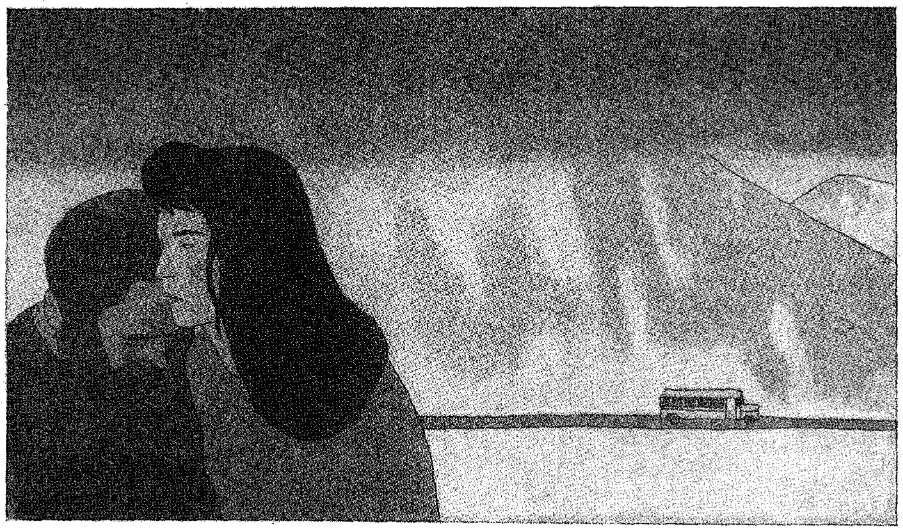
The Jackal—An international thriller that makes Brian De Palma's 1996 "Mission: Impossible" look cogent and exciting. It's loosely based on the 1973 classic "The Day of the Jackal": Bruce Willis is the villainous master of disguises out to assassinate an important political figure, Richard Gere an imprisoned I.R.A. terrorist (his accent is better than Brad Pitt's in "The Devil's Own") brought in to track him down. As directed by Michael Caton-Jones, the movie follows Willis's assassin around the globe without much suspense or many surprises. Though Gere is game, Willis barely registers: while it's interesting to see him as an unrepentant bad guy for a change, he brings none of his usual engaging irony to the role. His character is humorless, and so is this dryly competent film.—*B.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, National Twin, and Orpheum VII.)

Kiss or Kill—An outback thriller by the Australian writer-director Bill Bennett, about criminal lovers (Matt Day and Frances O'Connor) who start to suspect each other of the murders committed around them while they're on the run. The two stars pull off a seductive con as they keep the audience guessing about their characters. (O'Connor is amazing—she has the trembly theatrical spark of a Jessica Lange.) The film isn't much more than a bunch of vignettes strung together, but they benefit from Bennett's spare style. He and his actors expertly navigate the twists and turns of the road-movie genre, bringing this eerie example to a witty and satisfying conclusion.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Mad City—Another polemical thriller from the director Costa-Gavras; this time his target—not exactly hard to hit—is the modern media. John Travolta plays a fired museum guard who returns, with a shotgun, to discuss the matter with his boss (Blythe Danner); within minutes, a quarrel has boomed into a crisis, with a down-at-heel TV reporter (Dustin Hoffman), seeing his chance to take center stage on network television, as a more than enthusiastic hostage. The satire never really bites: Costa-Gavras refuses to let Hoffman off the leash, and toward the end his character is even forced to see the error of his ways. How can a movie so indebted to melodrama have the gall to sneer at the bad habits of television? With Alan Alda as—surprise, surprise—an oily anchorman.—*Anthony Lane* (11/17/97) (Criterion Center and 59th Street East Cinema.)

The Man Who Knew Too Little—Bill Murray has a wonderfully understated and sarcastic delivery in this spy comedy, smoothly directed by Jon Amiel ("The Singing Detective"), but it's a performance begging for a challenge. Although the screenplay, by Robert Farrar and Howard Franklin, offers a premise that allows for some funny Clouseau-like bits—a video clerk thinks he's participating in live outdoor theatre when in fact he's been mistaken for an intelligence agent—the writing itself is thin on laughs. Murray carries the film, instinctively goosing the flat dialogue into comic shape.—*B.D.* (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and 64th and 2nd.)

One Night Stand—Mike Figgis's first film since "Leaving Las Vegas" is high on atmosphere and embarrassingly low on content. Wesley Snipes plays a filmmaker who's sold out and now directs TV commercials in Los Angeles. He flies to New York to see an HIV-positive friend (Robert Downey, Jr.), and fate brings him together with a fetching, platinum-blond Nastassja Kinski, who bites her lip and lets clumps of hair hang in her face as a sign of vulnerability. Back in L.A., he fights with his wife (Ming-Na Wen, in an uptight, unconvincing performance). Snipes is good enough to make a selfish character seem sympathetic and deep, and Downey tries hard with the maudlin role of the martyr who teaches others to seize the day. But New York isn't as violent as Figgis makes it look, and L.A. isn't the glamorous wasteland he imagines. And Snipes's crisis isn't profound—it's really just a contest between the irritating wife and the hair-in-her-face girlfriend: a no-brainer. Figgis also wrote the lush, jazzy score, which changes mood every ten seconds, announcing the drift of each scene like a bullhorn.—*S.K.* (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)



Earl Pastko and Arsinée Khanjian in Atom Egoyan's "The Sweet Hereafter."

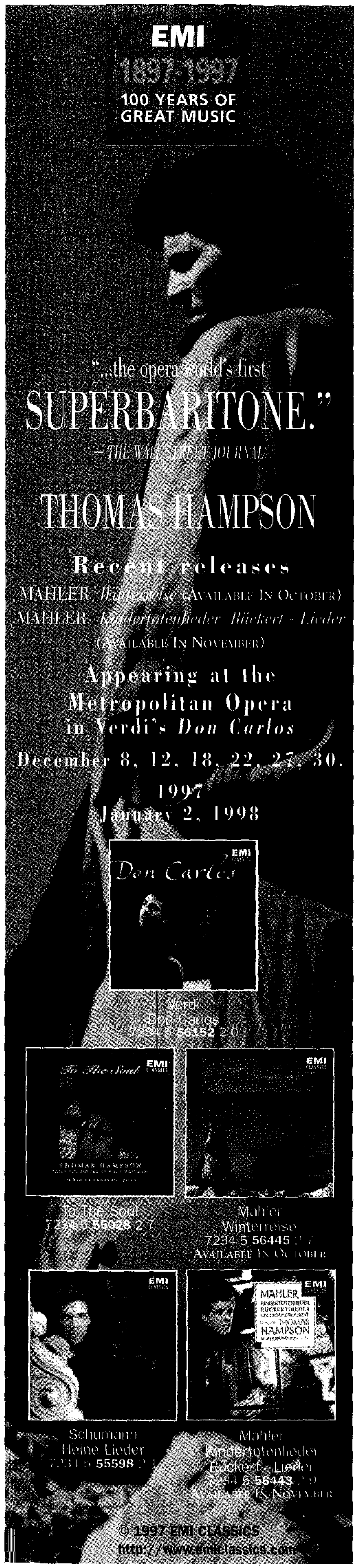
HERVÉ BLONDON

Starship Troopers—Hollywood is making war movies again, and this one has an early lead as the worst of them. A futuristic, overproduced version of the fifties flicks in which giant insects wage war on mankind, it's energetic and loud, with some extraordinary computer bug work by the special-effects master Phil Tippett ("Jurassic Park"). But Paul Verhoeven has directed it with a bludgeon and cast it with actor-models whose soap-opera dialogue suggests "Melrose Place Goes to War." The look is battleship-gray Styrofoam with cafeteria lighting, and this flatness lends the whole expensive enterprise a numbing, fascistic feel. (In 1979, Verhoeven made a vastly superior war drama, "Soldier of Orange.")—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Stranger (1967)—Marcello Mastroianni plays Meursault, the Camus hero, very simply, with scrupulous intelligence and concentration. Directed by Luchino Visconti, the movie has great passages and is highly effective in suggesting the atmosphere of the novel—the Algerian heat, the sudden, unpremeditated violence. What's missing is the psychological originality that made the book important. The novel was a definitive new vision—a more honest view of human behavior. But by the time the movie was made, that vision had already entered into the modern sensibility, and the concept of alienation had become cut-rate and conventional in movies. In French.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 28.)

The Sweet Hereafter—An exquisitely sober movie by Atom Egoyan, based on the novel by Russell Banks. Ian Holm, holding the screen with volcanic force, plays the big-city lawyer who is trying to bring a class-action suit on behalf of a small blue-collar town in British Columbia in the wake of a school-bus accident. His rage over the fate of his own daughter (Caerthan Banks), who has disappeared into drugs and AIDS, lends credibility to his mission, but it also blurs the line between his genuine sorrow and his shrewd milking of other people's. The uniformly good cast includes Bruce Greenwood as a wary mechanic who has lost twins in the accident, Alberta Watson as the lachrymose erotic interest, and Sarah Polley, who is extraordinary as a paralyzed survivor of the crash who tells a lie that keeps the community together. Also with Arsinée Khanjian and Earl Pastko.—*D.M.* (11/24/97) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Tango Lesson—Sally Potter's latest venture, ostensibly a feminist fable about sexual power play and the intricate workings of the artistic imagination, is an unwatchable exercise in undiluted narcissism. Potter plays herself, a frustrated movie director who decides to take tango lessons from a young, good-looking dancer (Pablo Veron) and then proceeds to make a film about a movie director who's taking instruction from—or is she



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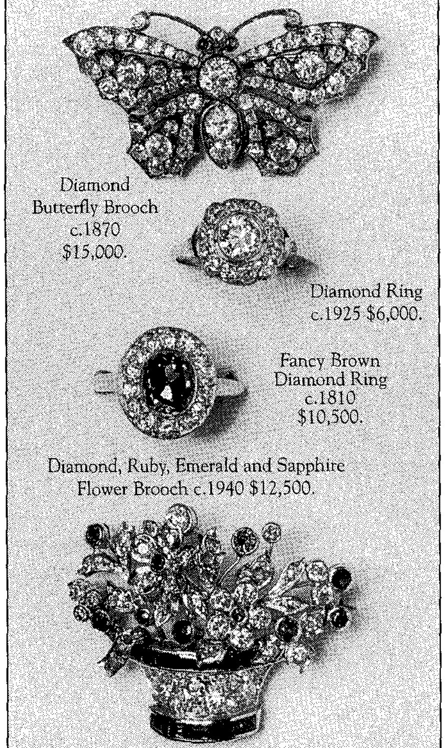

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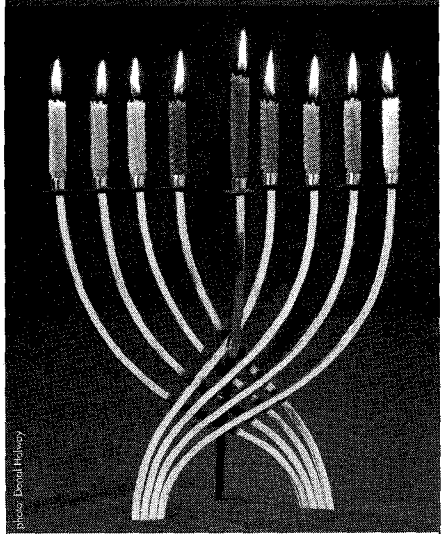

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instructing?—a young, good-looking dancer. This is either an example of a brilliantly post-structuralist, post-narrative approach to plot or the flimsiest story line yet to come down the pike. The dialogue is banal when it's not altogether clichéd, and the underlying fantasy—that a young man and an older woman would be drawn to each other less out of mutual exploitation than out of a vaguely shared sense of deracination (there's the shred of a subplot about Jewishness)—is so unexamined as to feel uncomfortably self-serving. Set in Paris and Buenos Aires, and shot mostly in elegant black-and-white, the movie might have been conceived by a fashion stylist; indeed, Potter's clothes, from her simple white T-shirts to her evening wear, are the best thing about it.—*D. M.* (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

Trapeze (1956)—Trapeze work is so graceful, so scary, and so marvellously photogenic that it has always been a source of regret that circus movies generally slight the high flyers and dwell on the seamy side. The script of "Trapeze" doesn't have much distinction, but one is, nevertheless, caught up in the excitement. There's vitality in Carol Reed's direction, and an exuberant sweep in Robert Krasker's camerawork. Burt Lancaster and Gina Lollobrigida function as stars—they're magnetic. And Tony Curtis shows the beginnings of acting skill (the later "Sweet Smell of Success" showed how much he could learn). While the film is going on, you're too absorbed to consider how banal the story is; after it's over, you've had too good a time to care.—*P. K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 26 and Nov. 29.)

Variety (1925)—A German classic of sadomasochism in a circus setting, with the master masochist actor Emil Jannings as an acrobat who leaves his wife for a foreign girl (plumply erotic, saucer-eyed Lya de Putti); he forms a trapeze act with the girl and a younger acrobat (Warwick Ward)—who inevitably seduces her. The enduring power of the movie, directed by E. A. Dupont and photographed by Karl Freund, is not in its far from original story but in the restless, subjective camera and the fast editing, which make it an almost voluptuous experience. Silent.—*P. K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 30.)

Washington Square—With its dark interiors, ticking clocks, and buttoned-up style, this film by Agnieszka Holland can't be faulted for not being true to the spirit of Henry James. Holland is good at underlining the emotional and physical discomfort of the hoodwinked heiress Catherine Sloper (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and the sleekly ingratiating ways of the fortune seeker Morris Townsend (Ben Chaplin). But in the end her interpretation seems arbitrarily dismal, as though someone had decided to gaze at life through brown lenses and then wondered bitterly why the color had gone out of everything.—*D. M.* (Paris.)

The Wings of the Dove—The director Iain Softley's adaptation of Henry James's magisterial late novel starts out as a jazzy, confident effort. But it gets a bit sluggish with the entrance of Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), the rich, good-hearted American orphan whom the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) persuades her lover, Merton Densher (Linus Roache), to seduce in order to secure their future together. Elliott doesn't have the depth to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, and this deficiency threatens to undo the film, despite its glorious costumes and all that golden Venice light.—*D. M.* (11/10/97) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

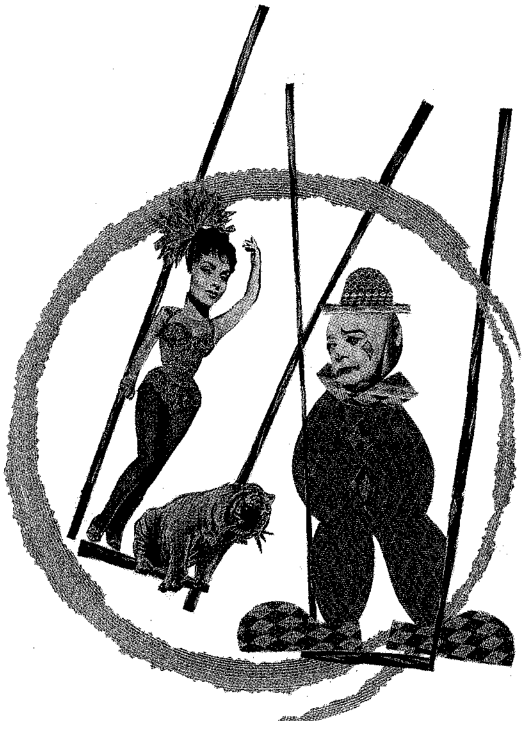
ALSO PLAYING

BOOGIE NIGHTS (reviewed in our issue of 10/13/97): Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **CONSPIRACY THEORY** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **COP LAND** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:** 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **THE EDGE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FAST, CHEAP & OUT OF CONTROL:** Film Forum 3 . . . . **THE FULL MONTY:** First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Quad Cinema. . . . **THE GAME:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HAPPY TOGETHER:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE HOUSE OF YES:** The Screening Room and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **THE ICE STORM** (9/29/97): Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Murray Hill Cinemas. . . . **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **IN & OUT:** Embassy 4. . . . **IN SEARCH OF THE DREAM:** Embassy 3. . . . **JOHN GRISHAM'S THE RAINMAKER:** East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **L.A. CONFIDENTIAL** (9/22/97): Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE LITTLE MERMAID:** Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 2, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **MEN IN BLACK** (7/7/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **MRS. BROWN** (8/4/97): Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema. . . . **MORTAL KOMBAT: ANNIHILATION:** Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Gotham Cinema, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE PEACEMAKER** (10/6/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RED CORNER:** 84th Street Sixplex, National Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **SHALL WE DANCE?:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and The Screening Room.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Nov. 26: “One Step Away” (1968, Ed Pinkus and David Newman), “Ira, You'll Get Into Trouble” (1970, Stephen Sbarge), and “Last Summer Won't Happen” (1968, Peter Gessner and Tom Hurwitz). . . . Nov. 27: “Petey and Johnny” (1961, Robert Drew) and “Storm Signal” (1966, Drew). . . . Nov. 28-29: “The Queen” (1968, Frank Simon), “Lonely Boy” (1961, Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroiter), and “Queen of Apollo” (1970, Richard Leacock). . . . Nov. 30-Dec. 1: “Salesman” (1968, Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin) and “Gimme Shelter” (1970, the Maysleses and Zwerin). . . . Dec. 2: “Child of Manhattan” (1933, Edward Buzzell) and “Jealousy” (1934, Roy William Neill).



At the Walter Reade Theatre, films about the circus.

O. KARPINSKY

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films directed by Luchino Visconti; in Italian, with English subtitles. Nov. 28 at 2:30: “Sandra” (1965). . . . Nov. 28 at 6: “The Stranger” (†). . . . Nov. 28 at 8: “The Innocent” (1976). . . . Nov. 29 at 2: “The Damned” (1969). . . . Nov. 29 at 5: “Death in Venice” (1971). . . . Nov. 30 at 1:30: “Ludwig II” (1972). . . . Nov. 30 at 5: “Conversation Piece” (†). . . . Dec. 1 at 2:30: “We, the Women” (1953), “The Witches” (1967), and “The Job” (1962). . . . Dec. 1 at 6: “The Earth Trembles” (1948). . . . Dec. 2 at 2:30: “Bellissima” (1951). . . . Dec. 2 at 6: “Senso” (1954). . . . ¶ A program of recent videos from China. Nov. 28 at 2:30: “Bumming in Beijing—The Last Dreamers” (Wu Wenguang). . . . Nov. 28 at 6:30: “At Home in the World” (Wu). . . . Nov. 29 at 2: “I Graduated!” (Shi Jian and Chen Jue), “Flow” (Yau Ching), and “Rocking the Great Walls” (Victor Huey). . . . Nov. 29 at 5: “No. 16, Barkhor South Street” (Duan Jinchuan). . . . Nov. 30 at 2: “Out of Phoenixbridge” (Li Hong).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A series of films that use the circus as their theme. Nov. 26 at 2 and 6:15 and Nov. 29 at 4 and 8:10: “Trapeze” (†). . . . Nov. 26 at 4:10 and 8:20 and Nov. 29 at 6:15 and 10:15: “Sawdust and Tinsel” (1953, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). . . . Nov. 27 at 2 and 6:15: “Jumbo” (1962, Charles Walter). . . . Nov. 27 at 4:20 and 8:35: “Parade” (1973, Jacques Tati). . . . Nov. 28 at 2 and 6:40: “I'm No Angel” (1933, Wesley Ruggles). . . . Nov. 28 at 4 and 8:30: “Lola Montès” (1955, Max Ophuls; in French). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 2: “You Can't Cheat an Honest Man” (1939, George Marshall), with W. C. Fields. . . . Nov. 30 at 4: “Variety” (†). . . . Nov. 30 at 7: “He Who Gets Slapped” (1924, Victor Sjöström; silent). . . . Dec. 1 at 2 and Dec. 2 at 4:15 and 8:45: “The Big Circus” (1959, Joseph Newman). . . . Dec. 1 at 4:10 and Dec. 2 at 2 and 6:30: “Bye Bye Brazil” (1980, Carlos Diegues; in Portuguese).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Nov. 29 at 2 and Nov. 30 at 4: “Flaming Creatures” (1963, Jack Smith). . . . Nov. 29 at 4: “The Devil Is a Woman” (1935, Josef von Sternberg). . . . Nov. 29 at 5:30: “Arabian Nights” (1942, John Rawlins). . . . Nov. 30 at 2: Six short films directed by Ken Jacobs, and starring Jack Smith. . . . Nov. 30 at 5: “The Flower Thief” (1960, Ron Rice).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Dec. 2 at 7: “Day for Night” (1973, François Truffaut; in French), with Jacqueline Bisset, Valentina Cortese, and Jean-Pierre Aumont. . . . Dec. 2 at 9:15: “8½” (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, and Anouk Aimée.

From Paris to Hollywood—The Alliance Française presents a series of French films (shown in Florence Gould Hall) alongside the American films based on them (shown in Tinker Auditorium). Dec. 2 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: “Trois Hommes et un Couffin” (1985, Coline Serreau). . . . Dec. 2 at 6:15 and 8:45: “Three Men and a Baby” (1987, Leonard Nimoy). (Both at 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.)

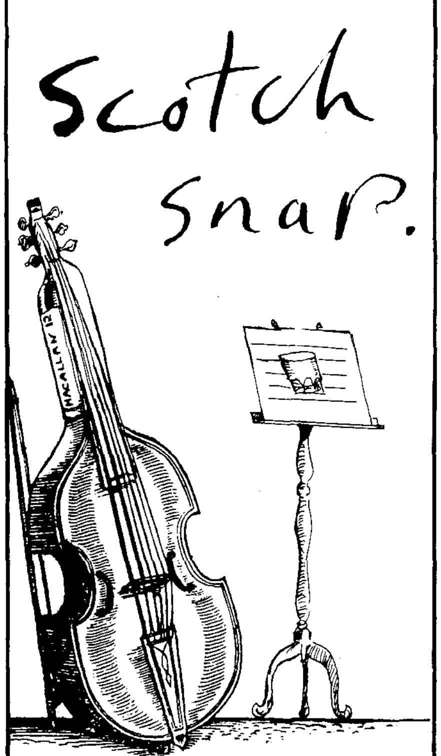
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.—Starting Nov. 28, the fifth annual Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival, featuring forty films from twenty-six countries. (For information about titles, schedules, and tickets, call 749-6020.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 30 at 7, the feature will be “Sweet Dreams” (1985, Karel Reisz), with Jessica Lange and Ed Harris.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at noon: “Bringing Up Baby” (1938, Howard Hawks). . . . Nov. 26 and Nov. 28 at 3: “Gilda” (1946, Charles Vidor). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 11:30: “Indiscretion of an American Wife” (1953, Vittorio De Sica). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 1:30: “The Seven Year Itch” (1955, Billy Wilder). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 4: “The Ambassador's Daughter” (1956, Norman Krasna).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Nov. 30: “That Certain Summer” (1972, Lamont Johnson), with Hal Holbrook, Martin Sheen, and Hope Lange. . . . Starting Dec. 2: “Love Among the Ruins” (1975, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier. (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Nov. 26-27 at 7 and 9, Nov. 28 at 6 and 10:15, Nov. 29-30 at 6 and 10, and Dec. 1 at 7: “A Couch in New York” (1995, Chantal Akerman). . . . Nov. 26 and Nov. 28-29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 6:30 and 8:35: “Murder and Murder” (1996, Yvonne Rainer). . . . Nov. 26 at 10:05: “The Touch” (1971, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). . . . Nov. 28-30 at 8 and Dec. 1-2 at 9: “Dead Heart” (1996, Nicholas Parson). . . . Nov. 28 at 10:30: “Potemkin” (1925, Sergei Eisenstein; silent). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 2: “Toni” (1934, Jean Renoir; in French). . . . Nov. 29-30 at 3:40: “La Vie Est à Nous” (1936, Renoir; in French). . . . Nov. 29 at 4: “October” (1928, Eisenstein; silent).



A manuscript from a Conservatoire of Music

Sirs, it may have come to your notice that in music we have a term *‘Scotch Snap’.* This usually takes the form of a semiquaver followed by a dotted quaver, a device favoured particularly by baroque composers such as Handel giving a distinctive ‘jerky’ character to a dance tune.

It has been suggested in the Professors' Common Room that this figure derived its name from the rough liquors of the time which imparted *a sudden jolt to the Scottish tastebuds.*

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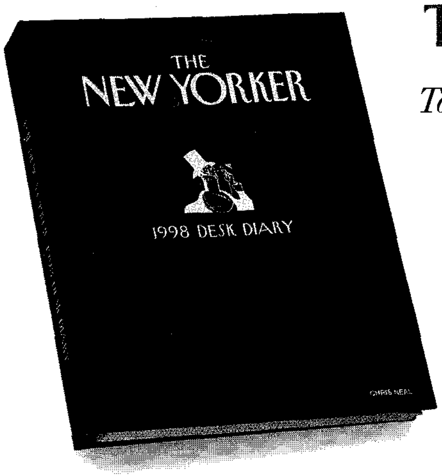

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

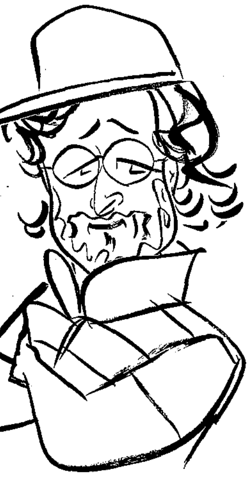
THE PICTURES

One novelist, two screenwriters, and confusion aboard the Amistad.

When advertisements for Steven Spielberg's forthcoming movie, "Amistad," appeared last month, the screenplay was credited to David Franzoni and Steven Zaillian. This month, however, the ads have changed, and it appears that only Franzoni wrote "Amistad." Writing a successful Spielberg movie can, of course, bring tremendous glory—Zaillian won an Oscar for his "Schindler's List" screenplay—and allows the writer to up his asking price. But in the case of "Amistad" being the screenwriter of record also means being embroiled in a complex legal battle.

"Amistad" has been garnering unwelcome headlines since October 17th, when Barbara Chase-Riboud, the author of the 1989 novel "Echo of Lions," brought a ten-million-dollar lawsuit against Spielberg's company, DreamWorks SKG, claiming that Spielberg had ripped off her book. "Amistad," like "Echo of Lions," tells the true story of Joseph Cinque, the leader of a band of Africans who were captured into slavery in 1839 and, after staging a shipboard mutiny, were jailed until John Quincy Adams argued their case before the Supreme Court. Chase-Riboud's central claim is that a well-to-do black abolitionist character—played by Morgan Freeman in the movie—was directly lifted from her novel, since no such character exists in the historical record. (The suit also notes that in 1988 Chase-Riboud's editor, Jacqueline Onassis, submitted her manuscript to Amblin, Steven Spielberg's production company, which turned down the project.) Last Monday, Chase-Riboud's lawyers sought an injunction to block the film's release, pointing out that David Franzoni had been associated with a putative adaptation of "Echo of Lions," after the book was optioned by Dustin Hoffman in 1993. "Franzoni," the suit reads, "used 'Echo of Lions' as a starting point for his screenplay."

Actually, things are more complicated, because the shooting script on which Chase-Riboud based her lawsuit wasn't the original screenplay that Franzoni wrote; it was Steven Zaillian's rewrite. A comparison of the two versions reveals that, while the basic plot of Franzoni's version remains intact in the shooting script, the compelling dialogue and nuanced characterization, which are likely to speed the film Oscarward, are mainly the work of Zaillian. For example, in a scene between Cinque and former President Adams in Franzoni's script the dialogue is perfunctory:



Steven Spielberg

CINQUE: You have some power.
ADAMS: I am respected.

Zaillian's version is more refined:

CINQUE: You are a chief.
ADAMS: Was a chief.
CINQUE: A chief can't become anything less than a chief. Even in death.
ADAMS: Oh, how I wish such were true here, Cinque. You've no idea.

Curiously enough, several of the incidental similarities between "Echo of Lions" and the film do not exist in the Franzoni draft, which suggests that they were actually atmospheric touches introduced by Zaillian rather than details that Franzoni found in the book. For example, Queen Victoria makes a (fictional) appearance in the book, and in the Zaillian script, but is not in the Franzoni version. The strongest pillar of Chase-Riboud's argument remains her contention that Franzoni took the erudite black abolitionist from her book.

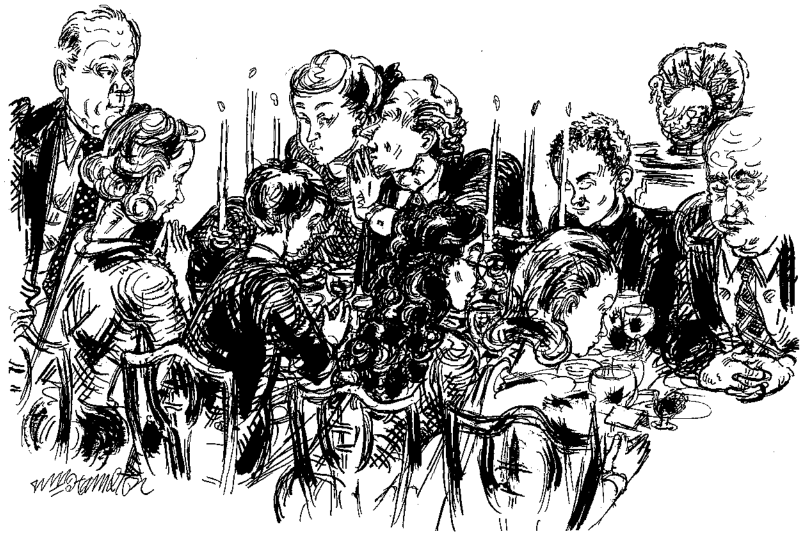
Bert Fields, the attorney for DreamWorks, said last week that, as far as he knew, no one associated with "Amistad" had read Chase-Riboud's novel, which is out of print. "If Franzoni read it—and he says he didn't—he didn't copy anything from it. The issue is, is there some substantial similarity that doesn't flow from history that is protectable? And there isn't." In fact, Dr. Clifton H. Johnson, founder of the Amistad Research Center, at Tulane University, who consulted with DreamWorks early on, says that he provided historical material about one James W. C. Pennington, a black abolitionist minister in Hartford who took up the case of the imprisoned Amistad Africans.

Whether Franzoni ever told anyone at DreamWorks about his involvement with Dustin Hoffman's "Echo of Lions" project remains obscure. "Based on human nature I would guess that he didn't," Fields said. "A writer would not usually say, 'Oh, I was involved with a failed project that nobody wanted to make.' " But, according to Franzoni's lawyer, Linda Lichter, her client—whose only other major credit is the HBO movie "Citizen Cohn"—was hired precisely because of his Amistad expertise.

Franzoni certainly seems to be faring rather well on his "Amistad" voyage. DreamWorks originally gave him and Zaillian a shared screenwriting credit. But when early press accounts of the movie kept focussing on the much better-known Zaillian, Franzoni asked the Writers' Guild to arbitrate, and last month he won sole credit. (The Guild tends to give credit

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

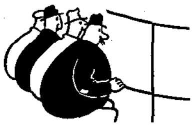
to a second writer on an original screenplay only when he has contributed at least half of the basic material; the actual dialogue is largely irrelevant.) Whether Franzoni will also be permitted to claim sole credit for inventing the character of a black abolitionist in the Amistad story remains to be seen. At any rate, Franzoni's monopolistic inclinations have been rewarded in the appropriate Hollywood fashion: he's writing another screenplay for DreamWorks. —REBECCA MEAD



"Put in something about the stock market."

THE SPORTING LIFE

An aesthete's-eye view of a rough-and-tumble American pastime.



WHEN Jonathan Miller, the British doctor turned satirist turned writer turned opera director, had nothing to do on a recent rainy Saturday, his friend the restaurateur Keith McNally invited him along to see McNally's thirteen-year-old son, Harry, play ice hockey. Miller, who is in New York preparing a new production of "The Rake's Progress," at the Met, had seen only one other hockey game, a couple of years ago, and it also featured Harry. But Harry and Miller were a good bit younger then, and there was less intensity both to Harry's style of play and to Miller's level of engagement.

"All these American games, full of parental testosterone," Miller said, perched on a bleacher rinkside at Chelsea Piers, where he was surrounded by men in hockey jackets, women in hockey jackets, and siblings in hockey jackets. "It would be wonderful to make a film about kids and sports in which the camera looked only at the parents, and never once at the game."

Miller, however, looked continuously at the game. At first, he saw it as a spectacle. "It's very beautiful to watch—you get the wonderful paradox of those awful, ungainly clothes and equipment and those swift, beautiful movements," he said. Then the play began to take on a more surreal air. The huge oval of ice reminded him of a vast trough, and the skaters pushing their sticks back and forth looked like gigantic spoons, scooping over and over through the trough. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all ate that way—just scooping out at each other in the trough?" Miller mused.

But McNally was not much interested in hearing his son's game interpreted as a scene from Buñuel, and he started to explain the offsides rule.

Miller nodded. But what he saw was choreography—and sociology. He observed the names on the jerseys of Harry's teammates: Cohen, Schulweis, Levine. "In England, you would never have boys with names like these playing such a rough, fast-moving game," he said. "It is so wonderful, all these names, playing this American game. Jews playing hockey. This is the least Waspy assemblage I've ever seen in America."

McNally went back to explaining the rules. By then, Harry's team, the Cyclones, was ahead 2–1, and Miller, tan trenchcoat notwithstanding, was growing increasingly indistinguishable from the parents who surrounded him. "Well passed!" he shouted at one point. "Very good!" The Cyclones continued to score—they eventually won, 6–1—and toward the end of the game the mood on the ice grew testy, with more pushing and shoving than normal. Miller said, "It reminds me of the end of 'Dr. Strangelove,' where they start getting very scrappy and someone says, 'Don't fight! This is the war room!'"

And then there was one of those triumphant moments in hockey: a breakaway, when a player skated down the ice alone, charged toward the goal, and shot the puck in, all by himself. Miller beamed. "This is really very beautiful," he said. —PAUL GOLDBERGER

DEPT. OF FOOLISHNESS

A parlor game helps awaken the porn star within.

THE recent film "Boogie Nights," the strobe-lit story of a porn star named Dirk Diggler, has been credited with boosting the improbable resurgence of sideburns and bell-bottoms. But there's another "Boogie Nights" ripple making itself felt around town. Dinner-party guests have noted the popularity of a new parlor game—the porn-star name game, whereby a simple formula is used to discover what name a person would go by if he or she were a porn star. For the first name, take the name of your first pet. For the surname, use the street name of your childhood home.

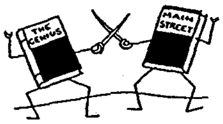
Paul Thomas Anderson (porn name Patrick Troost), who wrote, produced, and directed "Boogie Nights," said the other day that he had not heard of the game, but he shared his thoughts about what makes a good porn name. "It has two 'g's in it—there is something kind of tight but aggressive about the way those two 'g's look together," he said. "And any time you can incorporate a 'Saint' is good, like Jesie St. James. And it's important to stay away from being a Jr. or Sr."

A quick survey of a few biographies reveals some particularly winning noms de porn. Skookum Beacon? That's Ben Bradlee. Happy Rhonda? Rosie O'Donnell. Hootchie Park? Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. And if ponies count as pets—and surely they do—we can deduce the porn name of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II: Peggy Piccadilly.

—REBECCA MEAD

INK

Even Hollywood hoo-ha can't dress up the National Book Awards.



AROUND seven o'clock last Tuesday evening, the mood on the sixth floor of the Marriott Marquis Hotel was tense. In two hours, the winners of the 1997 National Book Awards would be announced, and, as nominees and judges disembarked from the space-age glass elevator capsules, the dreary ballroom lobby, site of a thousand actuarial conventions, felt more like a courtroom just before a murder verdict is handed down than like cocktail hour at a black-tie dinner. Jamaica Kincaid, in from Vermont and nominated for her incantatory memoir "My Brother," was in high dudgeon. "I hate this," she snapped. "Never nominate me for anything." Kincaid was being touted as the favorite.

Amazingly, no one seemed to know who *had* won, not even Neil Baldwin, who is in charge of the awards. The judges of the four awards—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and young people's literature (what happened to "children's literature"? Too youthist?)—had met for lunch and voted, he told me, but had kept the results to themselves. The winners would be announced, Academy Awards style, in the Grand Ballroom, and that was that. No leaks. Did Baldwin at least know where the judges had dined? "Let's see: nonfiction was at Le Cirque, children's was at Orso, poetry was at the Century, and fiction was at some Italian place downtown."

This ritual was a recent development. Like the saucer-size bronze medal that hung around each contestant's—I mean, nominee's—neck, it was an innovation of the era of public relations, designed to transform the staid awards into a high-drama media event. In the old days, everyone knew by the afternoon of the ceremony who had won.

Like the Oscarcast, the festivities were interminable, with a good two hours' worth of cocktails before anyone had anything to celebrate. After the receiving lines (receiving lines!), Wendy Wasserstein kicked off the ceremony with a mercifully funny speech, imagining what it would be like if the National Book Awards really did become like the Oscars—"paparazzi chasing the children's panel down the street, Joan Rivers commenting on Sonny Mehta's jacket and Andrew Wylie's glasses."

Finally, it was time for the awards. Kincaid lost the nonfiction prize to Joseph J. Ellis, for "American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson." Then the chief fiction judge, Nicholas Delbanco, gave a speech that one editor couldn't help pronouncing "fascinatingly bad, compellingly bad," before giving the award to "Cold Mountain," the best-seller by the first-time novelist Charles Frazier—and not to the front-runner, Don DeLillo's "Underworld."

That was the last straw for some. There was an exodus to the lobby for a smoking break. "What do you have to do to win? Throw down your crutches, like at Lourdes?" a publicist said bitterly, alluding to the fact that one winner had to be helped onto the stage. "A sham of a travesty of a sham," said a book editor. "I was sure it was DeLillo—it was maliciously done." Don DeLillo, encountered in the men's room, seemed calm."Frazier wrote a good book," he said equably.

By now, it was ten o'clock, and people were trickling back in to hear Studs Terkel deliver the keynote address. "No dancing, no nothing," I overheard one guest mutter. That about summed it up.

—JAMES ATLAS

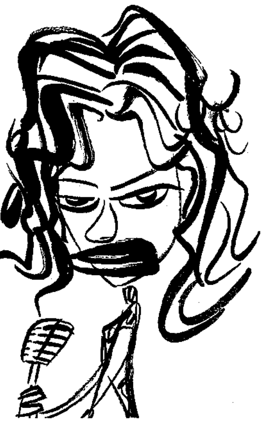
UP LIFE'S LADDER

A putdown artist gets positive.

IF you look at the titles of Sandra Bernhard's previous shows—"Without You I'm Nothing," "Giving Till It Hurts"—not to mention the title of her book, "Love, Love, and Love," you might surmise that Sandra Bernhard goes to great lengths to receive love or give it. But in the nineteen-eighties, when Sandy, as she sometimes calls herself, started to attract national attention as a comedian, it was largely because she was so good at complaining. She was the Queen of Dysfunction.

But now all that negative stuff is behind her. In her new show, "I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!," Bernhard rhapsodizes about a newfound glow of self-love, which she attributes to studying the Cabala for the last two and a half years. "The Cabala will kick your Jewish ass, whether you're Jewish or not," she said one recent afternoon. The Cabala is the body of ancient Jewish mystical teachings that has lately attracted such entertainment-business luminaries as Roseanne and Madonna. "It's not a fabulous social moment for me," Bernhard said. "I don't know why those other people go, but it's not for me to judge. The Cabala teaches you that the evil tongue kills."

But what about the fact that in her new show Bernhard continues to skewer people whom people love to love—ranging from Mother Teresa to Mariah Carey? Her critiques, she says, have been tempered by "a new spiritualism." And there's another difference. "The comedy I used to do—which was about being in a real bad place—is being done all over the joint now," she says. "I've moved on to new territory, telling funky stories about my own heartache instead of coming down so hard on other people just because I was holding back from talking honestly about myself."



Sandra Bernhard

Bernhard says she was turned on to the Cabala by her Brazilian trainer. "Of course, I'd been Bas Mitzvahed and all that," she said. Before Cabala, Sandy had all this love without a focus. "But now I'm feeling fabulous," she said, "passing my hand over those fabulous Hebrew words." —HILTON ALS

THE POLITICAL SCENE

JANET RENO, ALONE

The Attorney General's real legal battle isn't with the White House—it's with the F.B.I.

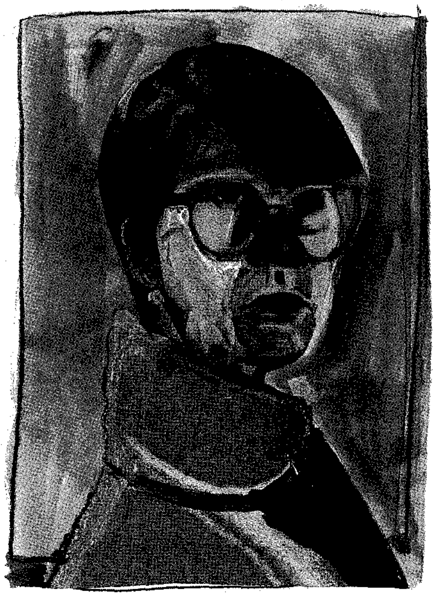
BY JANE MAYER

ON a quiet Friday evening earlier this month, the Attorney General of the United States, Janet Reno, indulged herself in a fantasy about life after the Clinton Administration. Outside the large windows of her office, the sun was setting over the Mall; most of the hundred and fifteen thousand federal employees who report to her were heading home. Some might consider her position—the most powerful job in the American legal system—fantasy enough, but at this moment her thoughts were far, far away from the squat building that houses the Department of Justice.

Other Washington dignitaries may dream of money to be made or ambassadorships to be garnered. Not Janet Reno. "I'd like to get in a truck," the Attorney General said. "That's what I'd like to do—get in a truck, and put in a cooler and a stove, and a little dresser drawer and a place for a cot. Then take a canvas, and have it hooked to the back so that it rolls out—I could use it as a tarpaulin—and take off across the country!" Reno's closest friend in the Cabinet, Donna Shalala, the Health and Human Services Secretary, says that Reno has talked with her about this notion. "I told her I'd drive," Shalala said.

If Janet Reno is entertaining fantasies of escape, no wonder. Reno came to Washington as someone whose integrity was beyond question and has seen herself cast as yet another Administration figure accused of lapses in ethical judgment. Because of her hesitation in appointing an outside counsel to investigate campaign financing, the *Times* has criticized her so frequently that its Reno-bashing editorials have come to resemble a running feature, like the skits showcasing "Janet Reno's Dance Party" on "Saturday Night Live."

Reno's mother once said of her, "She loves pressure more than prestige." But Reno, who is fifty-nine and is affected by the early stages of Parkinson's disease, seems close to having had enough of both. During a gruelling but masterly eight-hour appearance last month before the House Judiciary Committee, she could be glimpsed clutching her knees to conceal a tremor. She says that when she graduated from Harvard Law School, in 1963, she promised herself that she would never stay in a job she did not enjoy. And although she says that she still finds being Attorney General "fun," and that she has much she wants to accomplish, she also says, "There are days that I can do without. Luckily, I'm good at going home and curling up with a good book, and just dropping out of whatever I was in."



A Justice veteran thinks Reno "outfoxed herself" by giving too much authority to Freeh.

THE appeal of settling in with a good book is obvious, after more than a year of investigating the seemingly inexhaustible supply of embarrassments generated by the fund-raising operations of the Clinton-Gore reëlection campaign. As in all criminal probes, details of the Justice Department's investigation have been secret, but it has been clear all along that whatever the Attorney General de-

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cided about referring a criminal investigation to an outside prosecutor would have enormous political consequences.

From the start, Reno said simply that she would base her decision on the law and the legal facts. But when we spoke earlier this month she conceded that neither the law nor the facts were as clear as one might wish. When I asked Reno if two experienced lawyers could reach opposite conclusions on the rightness of appointing an independent counsel—which is, remarkably, the case with Reno and Louis Freeh, the F.B.I. director—she sighed and said, "I think so."

Last week, officials close to the investigation told me that Reno had in fact decided not to name an outside counsel in the specific cases at hand, which involved the question of whether President Clinton and Vice-President Gore had violated the Pendleton Act of 1883 by soliciting campaign funds over the telephone from federal property. Rather, these officials said, Justice is likely to indict at least one lower-level person—the former Little Rock restaurateur Yah Lin (Charlie) Trie—for campaign fund-raising violations, and perhaps will take other actions against more prominent figures in the future.

A finding by Reno that the allegations of wrongdoing against the President, the Vice-President, and other senior officials are not "specific and credible" enough to warrant an outside investigation is likely to further enrage her critics and, in addition, to telegraph to the country that the campaign-finance laws are not taken seriously. On the other hand, a decision to appoint an independent counsel would carry with it the potential to damage not only the legacy of President Clinton but also the future of his presumed heir, the Vice-President. The independent counsel Kenneth Starr's Whitewater investigation of what began as a small-time real-estate deal is now entering its fourth year, at a cost, so far, of more than twenty-five million dollars. One can only imagine what an inquiry into the entire fund-raising operation of the 1996 campaign would entail.

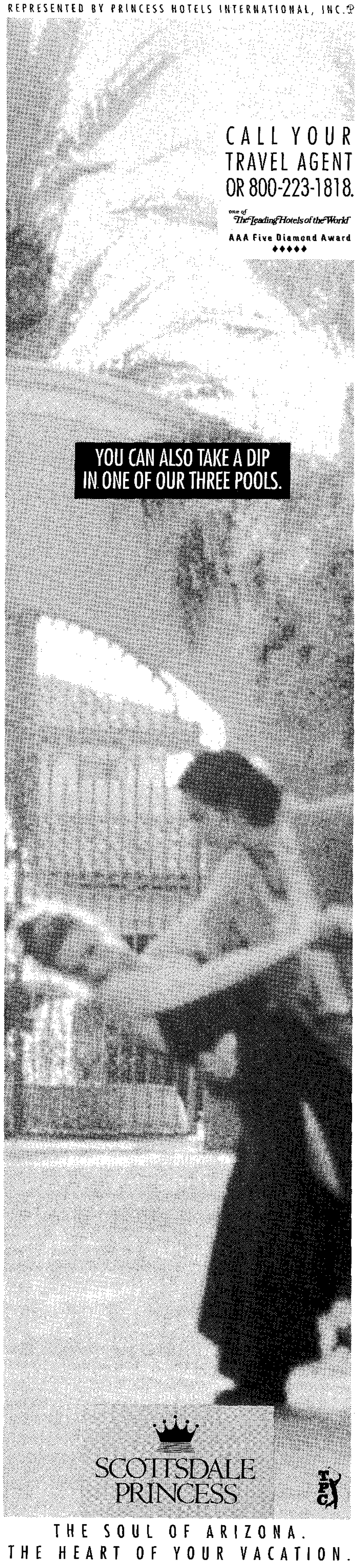
Despite the political issues, and the inevitable criticism, few people sincerely doubt Reno's integrity. The question, however, seems to be whether good intentions are enough to run the Justice Department in an era when so many political fights devolve into nasty legal showdowns. Reno's struggles sometimes seem like a test of whether a strong-willed, self-contained individualist—someone who seems almost out of place in the twentieth century—can prevail simply by doing what she sees as the right thing.

Ironically, Reno is accused of protecting a President who, by most accounts, doesn't much like her. Indeed, after Clinton was reëlected, he let it be known that he wanted Reno to resign. Reno announced that she planned to stay on nonetheless. Clinton, White House staffers say, didn't dare risk the political consequences of removing her, but, as Reno finishes her fifth year in the job, she is still regarded as being so alien to the Clinton Administration that one of those closest to the President refers to her in private as the Martian.

Reno certainly remains an unusually solitary person in gregarious official Washington. The phrases insiders use to describe her tend to focus on how out of place she is—"a different sort of animal" is one description—but such phrases may say less about the animal than about the zoo. Part of what makes Reno stand out, according to those who know her best, is that she appears to be indifferent to the judgment of others. Walter Dellinger, who served under Reno as Acting Solicitor General and has returned to teaching law at Duke University, says, "I sit down here in North Carolina reading in the paper that mounting pressure makes it inevitable that she will do this, or the opposite, but neither of these observations makes any sense in Janet Reno's world."

Reno lives alone in a small apartment a few blocks from the office, to which she walks each morning before seven and from which she usually returns home after eight. Her weekends are devoted to work, reading, and outdoor rambles—hikes along the C. & O. Canal (she estimates that she has walked about a hundred miles to date), or paddling on the Potomac River in a snub-nosed version of a kayak called a Poke Boat. She also enjoys felling trees with a chainsaw. Her sister, Maggy Hurchalla, a former official in Martin County, Florida, confirms that Reno finds this noisy pastime "more soothing than dealing with Congress."

In Florida, where Reno was raised, she has many devoted friends; she remains close to her brother and sister and their children. (Her parents are no longer alive.) But in Washington she functions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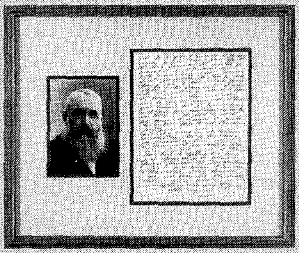

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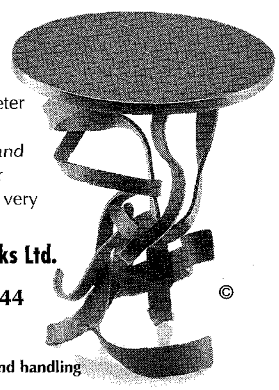

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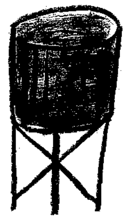
without allies either in the White House or on Capitol Hill. She has close colleagues in the Justice Department but few, if any, real confidants; she does not, I was told by more than one person, seem to need friendship. She reads the newspapers carefully but is more likely to complain about the time-consuming volume of news concerning her than about the contents of the stories. Dellinger says, “She simply does not respond to the system of positive and negative incentives that works in Washington: fear of criticism and ambition for higher office. She’s not driven by the need for approval,” and he sees her as “the single most inner-directed person I have ever known, without a doubt.”



There is a theory among some Clinton critics that Reno kept her job by striking a deal with the President during a private White House meeting in December of 1996, just before he announced her reappointment. However, if there is a “secret” about Reno’s relations with Clinton it pertains not to any collusion between them but to the distance between them. In modern times, most Presidents have chosen trusted associates to fill the post of Attorney General: John Kennedy picked his brother Robert (Robert Kennedy’s portrait hangs in Reno’s private office); Richard Nixon picked John Mitchell, his law partner; Ronald Reagan picked his personal lawyer, William French Smith. When Reno arrived in Washington—she had been the Dade County, Florida, state attorney—she was the only one of Clinton’s Cabinet choices who had not known him beforehand. Nor did she know any of the other Cabinet members. Moreover, she had never worked in the federal legal system.

During much of Clinton’s first term, he and his White House counsels seldom dealt with Reno directly except in formal settings, such as Cabinet meetings. And one former White House official says, “Even there, I was struck that she was almost reclusive.” By dint of her title, she was seated close to the President, this official adds, but “unless she was asked about an issue she sat there and said very little.” When I asked Reno if she considered herself to be a friend of Clinton’s, she replied, “He’s always treated me as if I were.” But she has been invited to just one state dinner, and, as she acknowledges, she has never been included in informal White House social gatherings. Clinton conceded on an overseas trip earlier this fall that he rarely talks to his Attorney General.

“The President and she just never clicked,” a current White House official says, citing both Reno’s evident discomfort with Clinton’s outgoing style and her more liberal views on criminal-justice issues. What may have done her more damage than her views or her inability to schmooze with the White House crowd, though, is her sometimes impolitic directness. (When the former White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler played down a children’s issue she had championed, Reno is reported to have said, “Lloyd, you don’t know what you’re talking about.”) One senior White House official regards Reno as so stubbornly perverse in her distaste for politics that he says, “I always thought that if we were soft on crime she would be hard on crime.” The former White House political adviser Dick Morris, whose only concern was politics, says, “She was obstructionist, liberal . . . and she spent most of the time in a snit.”

A number of Reno’s decisions have angered the White House. One of them, surprisingly, was her forthright acceptance of blame for the more than eighty deaths that followed the storming of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, in 1993. The mea culpa transformed Reno into a folk hero after she’d been on the job only a month, and a top aide to Clinton has told me that the President and others felt her candor to be a rebuke to Clinton, making him seem weak and equivocating by comparison. The Justice Department’s habit of announcing major policy decisions—such as changing the government’s stance on the landmark Piscataway affirmative-action case—without first checking with the White House has also rankled. But nothing Reno has done, a confidant of the President says, has made Clinton angrier than her record number of referrals of investigations to independent counsels, most particularly in the case of Henry Cisneros, the former Housing and Urban Development Secretary and a Clinton friend. “The President is still mad at her about that one,” the confidant says. Cisneros was accused of making false statements to the F.B.I. during his routine background check—specifically, underestimating the amount of money that he had paid to a former mistress. At the time, Reno noted that her decision to appoint the counsel had been a close call; several people familiar with her decision say that she was torn about it but that the F.B.I., whose agents were incensed at having been deceived, persuaded her to go forward.

It was generally assumed that the Cisneros probe would take a few months. Instead, it has lasted two and a half years, has cost at least three million eight hundred thousand dollars, and isn't over yet. The questioning has gone so far afield, two sources say, that the independent counsel, David Barrett, has even tried to investigate other women whom he thought might have been linked to Cisneros in the past. A spokesman in Barrett's office declined to comment on that subject, as did Cisneros's lawyer, Cono Namorato. Cisneros resigned from the Cabinet in November, 1996, and an indictment of him is expected by the end of the year.

It does not help Reno that she is thought by some to be a bad manager, and no one knows this better than Louis Freeh, whose agents have been working with Reno's attorneys on the investigation of campaign finances. In the chain of command at the Department of Justice, the F.B.I. head reports to the Attorney General, but Freeh has shown a talent for bureaucratic maneuvering that far surpasses Reno's.

At the root of Reno's management problems, according to several top-level officials who have worked closely with her, is a difficulty in setting priorities. Her staff frequently mentions her "get back" lists—compendiums of hundreds of items that she thinks need attending to. The lists, former and current staffers say, can give equal weight to an unhappy constituent's letter and to a revamping of the federal criminal code. "It wasn't just a forest-and-trees problem," someone who dealt with the office told me. "It was a forest, planets, trees, and leaves problem." In Florida, everything ran smoothly when Reno had a strong deputy; when she didn't, things tended to fall apart. This has been the pattern in Washington, too. Unfortunately for Reno, her talented No. 2, Jamie Gorelick, left last March.

Almost from the time a task force was appointed, a little more than a year ago, the Justice Department's investigation into campaign fund-raising has been mired in dissension and confusion. The task force was riven along institutional lines—between career attorneys from the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section and F.B.I. agents assigned to assist them.

Underlying the rivalry, according to sources from both the F.B.I. and the Justice Department, was a dispute over how serious the matter was and how senior the ultimate target ought to be. The F.B.I., taking its cue from Freeh, saw the President as the target, and aimed its investigation accordingly. Justice Department attorneys, taking their cue from Reno, wanted to focus on uncovering specific acts of wrongdoing rather than on particular persons. The two approaches were evident from the start. Justice assigned only four attorneys to the case, most of whom were following up on newspaper stories. According to an F.B.I. source, Lee Radek, the head of the Public Integrity Section, believed that the independent-counsel statute undercut his department's role, and was not convinced that the matter constituted a criminal case. "He told us there was nothing there, and that the whole thing should be wrapped up in ninety days," the source says.

The F.B.I., meanwhile, had designated the matter "Major Case Number 133," placing it in the same league as the T.W.A. Flight 800 investigation. "This was very unusual," an attorney familiar with the case says. By last spring, the F.B.I. believed that Justice attorneys should stop focussing on campaign-finance-law infractions, and instead try to make the case that there was a criminal conspiracy within the White House and the Democratic National Committee to evade campaign-finance laws. "It was mush," one attorney close to the task force complains. "But," this attorney says, "the F.B.I. was beginning to show itself target-driven, and the target was the President."

Given this difference of opinion, it did not take long for some of the Justice Department's attorneys to suspect that Freeh, who had been widely criticized by Republicans in Congress, was using the investigation as a means of repairing political damage he himself had suffered. Others thought that he was being political in another sense: trying to protect himself and the Bureau from direct blame for what would inevitably be a controversial—perhaps explosive—investigation. "From the

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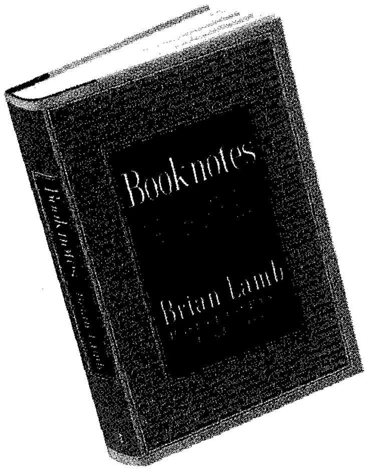

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start, I think the Bureau wanted an independent counsel," one Justice Department attorney says. "Freeh is really the crux of this whole thing."

Not surprisingly, the conflicting goals of the F.B.I. and the Justice Department generated mutual distrust. Although the Justice Department had secured office space in downtown Washington for agents and attorneys to work together, higher-ups at the F.B.I. preferred to keep all subpoenaed documents at Bureau headquarters, prompting complaints from the attorneys that they were unable even to look at documents crucial to their potential cases. F.B.I. officials claimed they were merely processing the documents into a computerized data system. A senior F.B.I. official concedes, though, that the data system was a quagmire. It was taking the agents ten days to process a single box of documents. By midsummer, the task force had subpoenaed thousands of such boxes. At one point, the rivalry grew so fierce—and so petty—that a struggle broke out over whose framed portrait photograph would be larger in the task-force office, Freeh's or Reno's. The attorneys, who at first were trumped by the F.B.I.'s big Freeh, sent for a jumbo Reno.

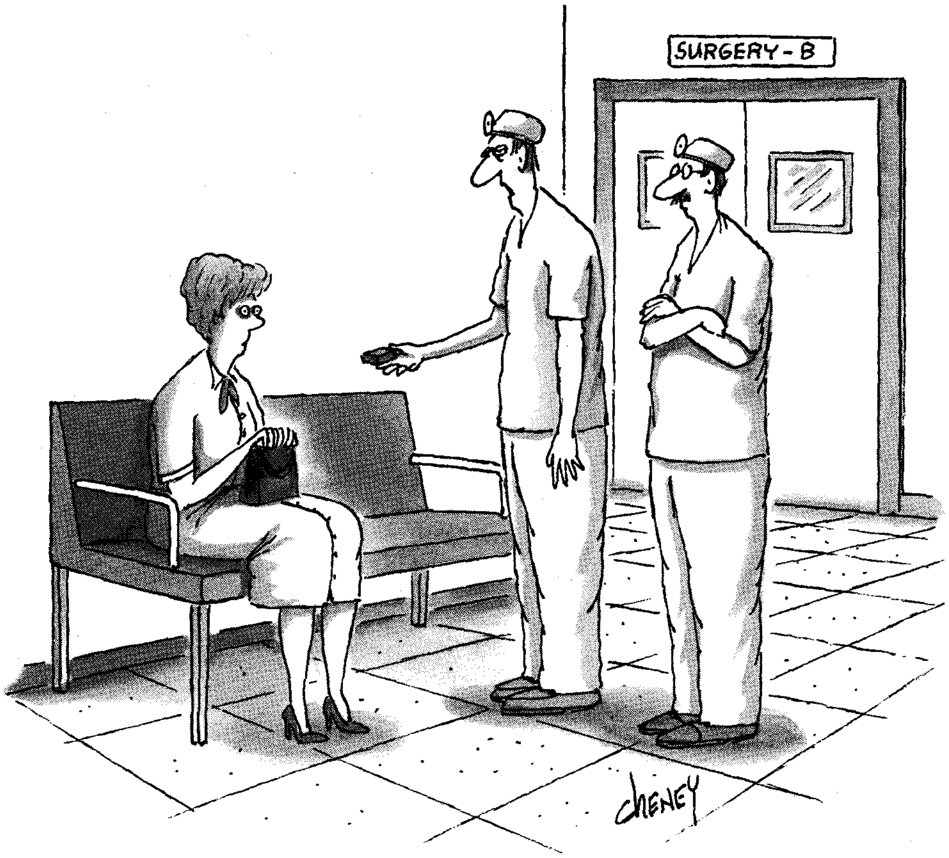
Because Freeh, unlike Reno, is by all accounts extraordinarily sensitive to public image, that increased the strains between the two agencies. Each time a new story broke in the press, the task force was asked why it had not known about it first. Last summer, when Fred Thompson, the Republican senator from Tennessee, was preparing for public hearings on the fund-raising issue, Freeh insisted that the task force interview every witness first—a demand that some of the attorneys viewed as little more than an exercise in self-protection. Freeh, who has a reputation as a first-rate investigator, apparently had reason to be concerned. The task force was unable to keep up with the flood of complicated leads that turned up in the news and the hearings. Before long, leaks sympathetic to his viewpoint began to appear in the press.

This fall, after a series of public humiliations, tensions got worse. First came a Bob Woodward story in the Washington *Post* reporting that some of the money raised by Al Gore in phone calls from his office went into the Democratic National Committee's "hard money" bank account, not just into the "soft money" accounts, which are unregulated by most laws. Gore says that he had no knowledge of this. Legally, the distinction probably doesn't matter much. But Reno's admission that she learned of it from the press was enormously embarrassing.

Then, in mid-September, in a closed meeting with several Republican senators, Reno and Freeh admitted that they knew less about the Chinese government's alleged involvement in the fund-raising scandal than did the director of the C.I.A., George Tenet, who was also in the meeting. Worse, Tenet said he had learned what he knew from the F.B.I., leaving the senators to conclude that both Reno and Freeh could not keep abreast of their own investigations. Senator Arlen Specter, of Pennsylvania, who attended the meeting, acknowledges that he was furious with both Reno and Freeh. They, too, left the meeting livid. Reno, whose temper is volcanic, was having what her staff had come to refer to as a "double veiner," so flushed were her face and neck. It later turned out that Reno had had at her disposal the information about the Chinese which the senators quizzed her on, but that she had either forgotten it or not read it. Freeh's underlings had the information, too, but had evidently failed to inform him.

That weekend, Reno and Freeh shook up the task force, removing its top Justice Department supervisor, Laura Ingersoll, and installing a new head, Charles La Bella, a San Diego prosecutor close to Freeh. Soon afterward, in an attempt to regain the confidence of Congress and the public, Reno announced that she would give Freeh equal say in overseeing the investigative aspects of the probe, and that she would foreclose no avenue of investigation until he was satisfied. Her move was seen as a risky gambit: to stanch the flow of leaks that seemed to be coming from the F.B.I., she was undercutting her own authority. One Justice Department veteran close to the situation wonders if Reno, by handing so much authority to Freeh, has "outfoxed herself."

Curiously, when Reno was asked about her relationship with Freeh, she said that all is well: they meet and talk often, and they are mutually respectful. Odder still, she denies that Freeh ever told her she ought to appoint an independent counsel in the fund-raising matter. "He has not



"I'm afraid there wasn't anything we could do to save him, but we did manage to recover his black box."

said it to me," she says. An F.B.I. spokesman said that Freeh declined to comment.

IT is generally agreed that Reno was reluctant to recommend an outside counsel because she sees no clear criminal case against the White House, and trusts herself to be fair. In addition, a few of the people who know her best believe, she has begun to have second thoughts about the independent-counsel process itself. Reno would not discuss her opinion, but she is surely aware that there is mounting, and bipartisan, sentiment within the legal community that the mechanism is out of control. As Warren Rudman, the former Republican senator from New Hampshire, put it to me, independent counsels are "kings in a land that doesn't believe in kings."

Since the independent-counsel legislation was enacted, in 1978, as a post-Watergate effort to encourage good government, the investigations launched under it have expanded sharply in number, cost, and scope. In the first eight years, six counsels served, at a cost of $4.5 million. By contrast, in the past eight years eight known independent counsels (the existence of others may be under court seal) have reportedly spent almost twenty times that much—$80.7 million. Between March, 1996, and March, 1997, the existing independent counsels spent twenty-one million dollars.

One current independent counsel, Donald Smaltz, has moved from California, and bought a house in the Washington area. Smaltz, the Starbucks of prosecutors, has had branch offices in New Orleans; Jackson, Mississippi; and San Francisco. In more than three years, he and his staff of forty have spent $11.9 million to investigate allegations that Mike Espy, the former Agriculture Secretary, accepted around thirty-five thousand dollars' worth of football tickets and other illegal gratuities from companies that he regulated. Although Espy has been indicted, he has not been charged with giving preferential treatment to his benefactors, but Smaltz has argued that this doesn't matter. Smaltz's spokesman, Charles Bakaly, says that when Congress created independent counsels it may not have realized how all-powerful it was making them. "These officials are very, very powerful," he says. "There's no budget, and there are no limits. All the ingredients for disaster are there."

Reno, meanwhile, has quietly—and unsuccessfully—made an effort to rein in some of these far-flung prosecutions. Sources close to the Espy investigation say that about a year ago Justice Department attorneys tried to deny Smaltz the right to expand his probe further. To Reno's consternation, the department was overruled by the three judges who oversee the implementation of the independent-counsel act. Some suggest that this setback to Reno's authority may be affecting her current decision.

In July, Eric Holder, formerly the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, joined Reno as her top deputy, bringing new stability to the Justice Department. But top officials there are nonetheless bracing for the reaction to a decision not to go outside the department on the campaign-finance investigation. No reaction, however, is likely to match Reno's experience back home, in May of 1980, when, following a series of well-intentioned missteps, her office botched the prosecution of five white policemen in such a way that all of them were acquitted of having beaten a black insurance salesman to death. Reno was so certain of her own fairness that she could barely fathom the response to the acquittals: there were days of riots—and twenty deaths—in Miami's largest inner-city black neighborhood, Liberty City, and Reno was stunned to find herself being castigated as a racist for having lost the trial. As stores were looted and burned, the rioters shouted, "Reno! Reno! Reno!"

"The thing that's most important for me is to know that it's not the end of the world," Reno said to me. After the riots, Reno, instead of giving up, threw herself into a remarkable community-relations effort. She met with virtually every critic, no matter how furious; defended herself on radio shows that broadcast to large black audiences; and attended every community meeting she was invited to. In a matter of months, she went from being compared to Hitler to being overwhelmingly reëlected. She won four consecutive elections.

Walter Dellinger believes that Reno will come to be appreciated in Washington, too. "At the end of the day," he suggests, "I think President Clinton will find himself well served by Janet Reno—someone he didn't know and who is not close to him. Reno's really a fire wall, and these days it's better to have a stranger as Attorney General." If Dellinger is wrong, there's always the open road. Reno's sister, Maggy, says, "I've told her I'll find her a dog." ♦

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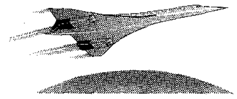

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ANNALS OF FOOD

PUCK'S PEAK

How Wolfgang Puck is becoming the first chef to turn himself into a brand name.

BY ARTHUR LUBOW

ONE afternoon this summer, at the Wolfgang Puck Cafe in West Hollywood, Barbara Lazaroff, who is Wolfgang Puck's wife, business partner, and all-around image custodian, was concentrating on terrazzo countertops and pizza-oven placement, and on menu language, merchandising, and signage. It was two months before a gargantuan branch of the Puck restaurant chain was to open at Disney World, in Orlando, and she was having lunch with Frank Guidara, the president of the Wolfgang Puck Food Company, and with a youthful artist named David Anson Russo. Lazaroff has long black hair, which sweeps down her right side, and large dark eyes, which are heavily accented with eyeliner and waterproof mascara. At this lunch, she was wearing a black velvet hat with a violet bow, and a sheer purple-flowered shirt over a lavender silk sweater. Against the red-and-yellow pizza-slice-shaped tiles of the restaurant, which she had designed, Lazaroff was surprisingly inconspicuous. It was the straight-arrow Guidara, in a drab business suit, who stood out.

Lazaroff, who has been married to Puck for fourteen years and is the mother of his two children, oversees much of the business. For one thing, she decides the way things look. In addition to the frenetically tiled Wolfgang Puck Cafes, she designed the original, often imitated Spago, in West Hollywood, along the lines of a stripped-down beach house. It featured an open kitchen spotlit by theatrical lights that gave Puck a stage on which to perform. This spring, Lazaroff's new Spago, lavishly embellished with etched glass and South African slate and purpleheart wood, opened in Beverly Hills.

Russo had brought to the lunch some doodles of a benevolent-looking wolf that Lazaroff hoped might improve a logo that she had been developing for the Disney World restaurant. She has for years been exploiting the happy coincidence that her husband's nickname is the English word for *Canis lupus*. "A design company sent me a wolf and it looked goofy, so I redrew it," she said to Russo. "I think ours looks more intelligent. He's a wolf dog. I took off the claws. I made him less threatening."

"It's a great concept," Russo said.

"It's an icon," Lazaroff said. "The first Cafe we did, there was a wolf and Little Red Ridinghood bringing pizza to Grandma. At the store at the airport, he's there delivering pizza by airplane. This is what we've been looking to do—make Wolf the Mickey Mouse of pizza."

When most people hear the name "Wolfgang Puck," they do not think of Mickey Mouse. They think of the Los Angeles chef who used the freshest, finest ingredients to popularize "California cuisine" for a high-powered clientele. A showman in the kitchen and a warm, witty host, Puck attracted to his restaurants the Hollywood names that appear in bold-faced type in the gossip columns. While he still provides that experience, in what the food industry calls his "fine-dining" restaurants, Puck has tied his future to "casual dining" and packaged supermarket foods. He hasn't lost his passion for cooking, but the trajectory of his career is pulling him away from the kitchen, and turning him into a raiser of investment capital and a brand name.

Puck, who appears on "Good Morning America" once a month, has become rich as well as famous. He and Lazaroff are now majority owners (their stake ranges from sixty to ninety-five per cent) of seven upscale restaurants, in L.A., San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Chicago, which together grossed fifty-six million dollars last year. (Spagos in Tokyo and Mexico City are licensed.) They also own a little more than a third of the Wolfgang Puck Food Company, which last year had revenues of seventy million dollars. At forty-eight, Puck is the most financially suc-

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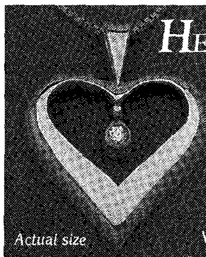

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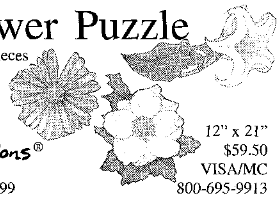

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cessful chef in history, and he is planning far bigger things. But, with his identity becoming as elastic as his pizza dough, the question arises: How wide can it be stretched before it gets too thin?

PUCK was shy when Lazaroff met him, in 1979. Indeed, he is still a bit shy, beneath his smile and his repartee. When he greets his customers, there is about him a tinge of reserve, a mixture of a little boy's timidity and a servant's reticence. Lazaroff encouraged him to speak up. They had been dating only a few months when, cleaning his bathroom, she found a pay stub from his job as chef at Ma Maison, the buzzy Hollywood bistro owned by Patrick Terrail.

"Is this what you earn every week?" she asked him.

"No," he said. "This is what I earn every two weeks."

"You got to be kidding," she said. "You work six nights a week? I don't think you value yourself enough. I think you ought to tell Patrick you need a raise. And you know what? You should be making twice as much." He did as she instructed, and six months later she told him it was time to ask for another raise.

Then, one afternoon, while they were watching television, they saw a Ma Maison waiter preparing a dish on a local show.

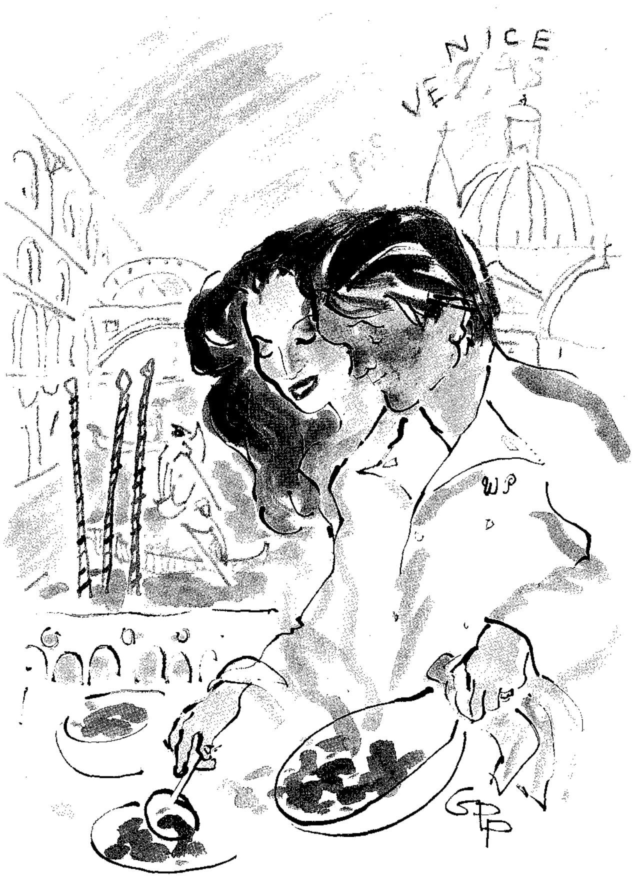
"What is he doing?" Puck exclaimed. "He's not even a cook!"

"Do you want to be on TV?" Lazaroff asked.

"Maybe," Puck said.

Lazaroff called up a friend, who booked him on a popular syndicated program. "I think she was the one who had a vision, and saw what there is today," says Richard Krause, a chef who once worked for them and is now at Martini's, in New York. "Everything she did seemed purposely geared to having this happen." When Lazaroff saw the jacket design for Puck's first cookbook, she insisted that the words "Ma Maison" be smaller and the name "Wolfgang Puck" be larger. "Why promote Ma Maison?" she said. "You're leaving anyway."

Puck quietly assembled a group of investors, and with the opening of Spago, in January, 1982, he achieved what he had dreamed of at nineteen, when, as a poor Austrian boy serving as apprentice to a top chef in Provence, he imagined owning his own restaurant. "The plan was to come to America, make a beautiful restaurant, and have a Rolls-Royce," says Guy Leroy, a chef in Jacksonville, Florida, who has known Puck since those early days in Provence. "But then Wolfgang learns very quickly that to cook in one restaurant, you're not going to get rich."



Puck with his wife and business partner, Barbara Lazaroff: Everything she did seemed geared to having this happen.

GLADYS PERINT PALMER

A year later, Lazaroff and Puck began working on their next restaurant—Chinois on Main, in Santa Monica. A capricious public that flocks to a hot dining spot one year is likely to abandon it the next. "Once it goes down, it's very hard to get back up," Puck says, and owning another restaurant acts as a cushion. Working with a narrow shoebox of a space into which she had to cram ninety seats, Lazaroff composed an Orientalist fantasy of celadon tables, bamboo wainscoting, a tiled open kitchen, and oversized pieces of Asian art: her ur-design. And Puck, in collaboration with Richard Krause, his chef, invented a hybrid of French and Chinese food which remains his most original cuisine.

PUCK and Lazaroff have had some setbacks in their fine-dining career. Eureka, a lavish brasserie that opened in West L.A. in 1990, went bankrupt after two years: the restaurant was making money, but it was attached to a brewery, and the brewery failed. Although Eureka is their only flop, Granita, a phantasmagoric grotto that Lazaroff designed in Malibu at a cost of more than three million dollars, is too ambitious for a seasonal location: after six years, it is barely breaking even. Still, the other fine-dining restaurants have profit margins that range from six to twelve per cent, providing Puck and Lazaroff with a very comfortable living but also with a very arduous life. A chef, no matter how famous, is a servant. "When people call you in the middle of the night, you have to be there," Puck says. "When someone complains, you have to come talk to them." He doubts whether his sons, who are eight and three, will follow him into the business.

Recently, I watched Puck in the kitchen at Spago Beverly Hills, where the kitchen is separated from the dining room by sliding glass panels, on which Lazaroff has had inscribed a poem she wrote about "the flame of life." (The so-called flame, which resembles a teardrop, is a recurring motif in the design of the restaurant. A granite fountain carved with the word "passion" in twenty languages is another prominent element.) Puck was dressed in a chef's white jacket and black-and-white striped pants, and had a dirty towel draped on one shoulder. His hands were stained red from cherry juice. He was dipping a finger in a hot saucepan.

"A little black pepper in the sauce for the ducks," he said. He walked away from the stove to a vast bin of morels and asked, "Do we have cilantro leaves for the fish soup?"

He was cooking a six-course lunch for twenty-two in honor of the French chef Alain Ducasse. During the lunch,

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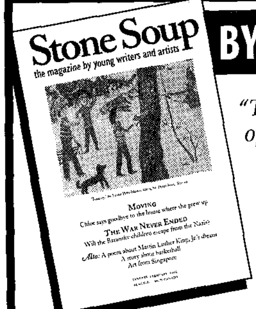

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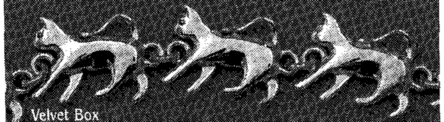

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which was served in a courtyard shaded by old olive trees, I raced back and forth from the kitchen. Beneath the trees, all was *luxe, calme et volupté*. Backstage, Puck was feverishly dropping clumps of rice by hand onto the plates while someone else draped them with two slices of tuna sashimi and one of yellowtail. Then he sauced them, using a squirt bottle. When Lee Hefter, the chef de cuisine, brought a bowl of guacamole to the worktable, Puck dolloped a little on the sashimi, then sprinkled on some sprouts. He called for the waiters. "O.K., I want everybody together," he said. "We have to get it out in one shot."

After lunch was served, a deliveryman arrived with three large rosy-brown calves' livers. Before signing the receipt, Puck sliced a bit off each liver and sautéed it. I asked the deliveryman what was happening.

"It's a first for me," he said, with a shrug.

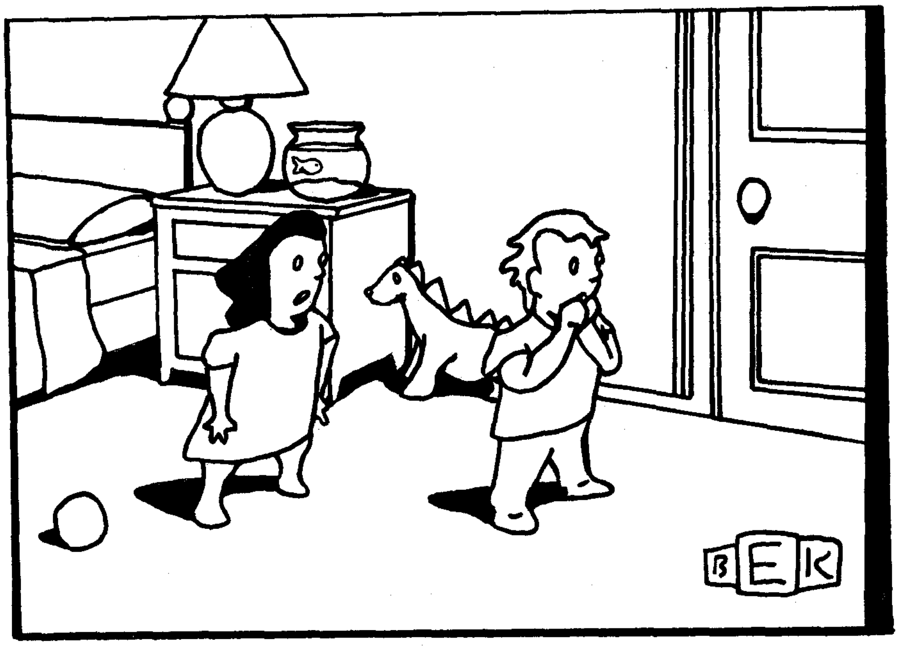
Later, Puck explained, "You have to taste them. You can have ten and each one is different. Nine can be fine and then one is tough."

A new Chinois is scheduled to open in Las Vegas this month, as is a Spago in Palo Alto. After that, Puck and Lazaroff, despite their enviable record, have no new upscale ventures planned. "I think we're at the point where we're not going to do much more fine dining," Tom Kaplan, who has been their partner in Spago from the beginning, says. "The future for Wolf and Barbara seems to be the Food Company."

LIKE so much else in Puck's domain, the Wolfgang Puck Food Company was brought to him as an opportunity. In 1983, Robert Koblin, a Beverly Hills cardiologist and internist, was tired of practicing medicine and thought of starting a frozen-food company called Chef's Choice, to which a few prominent L.A. chefs would each contribute a couple of nutritionally sound recipes. Puck was interested, but "I didn't want to be one of a number of chefs," he says. Eventually, Koblin decided to form a partnership with Puck alone. From early focus groups, Koblin deduced that people viewed "healthy" and "tasty" as contradictory. "So one day I turned around and said, 'Fuck 'em, let's give 'em what they want,' " Koblin recalls. "We dropped the good-for-your-heart approach. What would be good for you was there would be no preservatives. Frozen was our preservative."

What would they freeze? Pizza was an obvious choice, but Puck nixed it. He has an edgy relationship with the dish he helped to elevate. In the end, under the banner of the Wolfgang Puck Food Company, Koblin, who had entered the packaged-food business intending to market heart-healthy meals, introduced a series of rich frozen desserts.

By all accounts, the desserts, which were concocted by Nancy Silverton, the



"You're using the boogeyman as an excuse to shut me out."

pastry chef at Spago, were delicious. The apples for the pies, for example, were sautéed with Calvados. Unfortunately, the prices were as uncompromising as the ingredients, and the desserts didn't sell. As the company hemorrhaged its original investment of more than three million dollars, Koblin scrambled to reorganize it as a purveyor of frozen pizza. But he had run out of time. Investment bankers he brought in to refinance the Food Company installed one of their own, Selwyn Joffe, as the head of the company. Koblin is still bitter that Puck, whom he thought of as his friend, didn't protect him when the investors refused to honor two years remaining on his contract.

The new guard was enthusiastic about the potential of the Wolfgang Puck brand name. "He stands for quality," Joffe says. "He could be a beverage, he could be gourmet food." He could also, it turned out, be a fast-food joint. The Food Company stepped sideways into casual dining after the Macy's store in Union Square in San Francisco noticed long lines forming for samples of Puck frozen pizza and suggested opening a restaurant. Thinking that a restaurant would be too ambitious for the space, the Food Company, in 1991, inaugurated the Wolfgang Puck Express, offering counter service for a limited menu of pizzas and salads. Two years later, the first full-service Cafe came about, also in response to a proposal. Universal Studios wanted a Spago for its CityWalk, in Universal City, but Puck thought a sophisticated restaurant "wouldn't make sense there." So the Food Company invented the Wolfgang Puck Cafe, a moderate-priced version of Spago and a rival to such Spago copycats as the profitable California Pizza Kitchen chain.

Joffe saw the restaurants as a means of marketing the packaged foods. "If you are willing to pay at a Wolfgang Puck Cafe to sample the product, then you're going to come sample it later at the grocery store," he says. "From a use-of-capital standpoint, it was a much more efficient way to market the product." Joffe envisioned Puck as "the Armani of the food business," and modelled his approach on the fashion industry, where the high-priced label adds lustre to the brand, while the mass-oriented line reaps the profits: "My idea was, you'd open the Spago, which would be the Black Label, then the Cafes, which would be the White Label, then the Expresses, which is like the Emporio Armani, and then the home-meal replacement, which is like A/X. When I started, Wolfgang Puck was completely acceptable as a restaurant concept, but as a frozen concept he was still unknown."

THE casual-dining restaurants were so popular that they quickly overshadowed the frozen foods they were supposed to promote. With low food and labor costs and high volume, they have profit margins as great as twenty-five per cent—more than double those of the fine-dining restaurants. Real-estate developers shouldered some of the construction costs, so that, even with Lazaroff's elaborate interiors, the restaurant line was cheaper to expand than the frozen-food division. Packaged foods are a category dominated by behemoths like Kraft and Nestlé; to break into a Chicago supermarket chain this fall, the Food Company is spending a million dollars. Less hungry for capital, the restaurant line might have kept growing at a self-sustaining pace, but the board of the Food Company, composed of investment bankers, was impatient for a payoff. "From the beginning, the hope of the money people has been that we go public," Puck says.

Joffe prepared an initial public offering for the end of 1995. Because the Food Company was small and was reinvesting most of its proceeds, he wanted to combine it in the offering with the fine-dining restaurants. Lazaroff agreed tentatively, but when an independent audit came up with a low evaluation of the restaurants she balked. "I said I didn't want everything included in the I.P.O.," Lazaroff explains. "I don't want all the eggs in one basket." At that point, the fine-dining restaurants provided most of the couple's income. They could afford to postpone the millions that would be theirs when the Food Company issued public stock.

Once it was determined that the Food Company had to grow on its own before going public, a restaurant operator, not an investment banker, was needed, and Joffe was out of a job. A year ago, the board brought in Frank Guidara, from Restaurant Associates, in New York, where he had supervised

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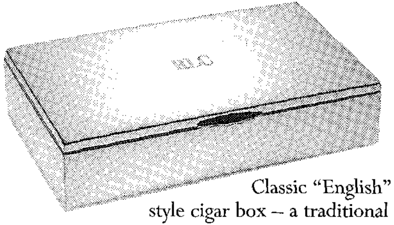

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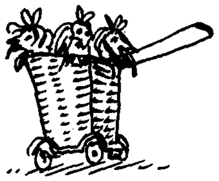
both upscale dining spots (SeaGrill, Tropica) and chains (Charlie Brown's Steakhouse, Panevino). Guidara has the military bearing of an infantryman, which he once was, and he set about imposing order on the Food Company restaurants. "The barbecued-duck quesadilla tasted one way over here and another way over there," he says. "That's not what you want in a chain environment. The supervising chefs had never been trained how to maintain consistency. We went through all the recipes, qualified them, took pictures of the items, and had them printed up on laminated paper." On the design side, Lazaroff is being pressured to simplify and tone down the heavily tiled, brilliantly colored Cafes.



To manage the packaged-foods division, which now generates seventeen million dollars in sales, Guidara hired Tom Warner, a marketer who had begun his career twenty-five years earlier selling soap for Procter & Gamble. In the old days, Puck would introduce a frozen lasagna closely modelled on his restaurant's version; today, the Food Company finds inspiration in the marketplace, not at Spago. "There are pizzas out there that are doing very well," Warner says. "How can we take that mainstream pizza and turn it into a Wolfgang Puck product? You take a pepperoni or a sausage pizza and, let's say, you do an apple-flavored chicken sausage. You do it with a twist."

After a new product is tested, it is brought to Puck for final approval. The chef who every November at Spago would shower white truffles on a pizza and then give it away to favorite customers is more earthbound when it comes to frozen food. "Our goal now is to be a premium brand but not too expensive," he says. "Before, we thought, This is what it costs, this is what we'll have to sell it for."

When you consider that a third or more of the bill at a fine-dining restaurant goes to pay food costs, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the fourteen-dollar pizza at Spago West Hollywood is distinctly better than the nine-dollar one at the Wolfgang Puck Cafe (and especially when you recall that the profit margin at the Cafe is double that of Spago). At Spago, for example, the pizza chef can use Santa Barbara spot shrimp; at the Cafe, the shrimp is frozen. When you descend down the food chain to the five-dollar or six-dollar frozen pizza, it would be kinder to compare Puck's offerings (favorably) with their frozen competitors in the supermarket bin, and not with any of the restaurant versions. His frozen pizzas (unlike his mushy lasagnas) are not bad. The spicy chicken one, in particular, makes a serviceable lunch: the crust is crisp, and the topping is flavorful. But anyone who expects a frozen pizza to taste as good as one that is made of hand-stretched dough and topped with farm-fresh ingredients is deluded. A Puck frozen pizza reproduces one from Spago about as well as a black-and-white photograph reproduces a Picasso painting. What comes through is the concept and the signature.

OBACHINE, which débuted in Beverly Hills last year, may have persuaded Puck and Lazaroff to curb their impulses toward excess in their Food Company restaurants as well as in the frozen-food business. It made great sense to develop an affordable version of Chinois on Main, especially for those real-estate opportunities in which the pasta-and-pizza niche had been preempted. By the time ObaChine opened, however, the penny-pinching virtues of a pan-Asian restaurant were hard to detect in the lofty, sophisticated space that Lazaroff designed and in the ambitious menu that Puck, working with two Asian chefs, created. The average check at ObaChine, instead of an anticipated twenty-three dollars, is closer to twenty-nine dollars—not just in Beverly Hills but also at a second ObaChine, in Seattle. That's too expensive a restaurant to replicate. "We've been working on bringing that down," says Guidara, who arrived at the Food Company shortly before the first ObaChine was launched.

A third ObaChine just opened in Phoenix, and Guidara wants to move the Food Company into the Midwest next year and the East in 1999. To do that, he will need an infusion of capital. A lot is riding on the Disney World Cafe and Express, which opened in mid-September. Measuring eighteen thousand square feet and costing more than seven million dollars, the Disney outlet is the Food Company's most am-

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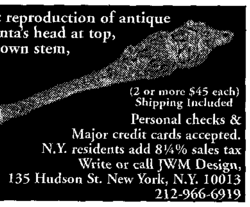
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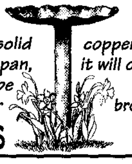
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bitious venture so far. Management has budgeted fifteen or sixteen million dollars in sales but hopes for twenty million. If the Disney site delivers, the Food Company is expected to issue a public offering late next year.

I got a good sense of Guidara's aspirations for the brand when he showed me a room in his offices in which test prototypes of Puck merchandise are stored. The Food Company is prohibited from manufacturing Wolfgang Puck cookware, because the name is already licensed to Sydney Silverman, a Florida businessman, who told me, "Wolfgang has the legs to be a Martha Stewart." However, with pepper mills, painted wooden bowls, etched glasses, corkscrews, and T-shirts, Guidara does not feel seriously restricted. "We're doing chefs' jackets for kids," he said. "We've looked at thousands of different items. I'd like to get to the point where we'd have in the Cafes the actual pots that James Beard used. You go into the Hard Rock Cafe and see a guitar that Jimi Hendrix used. Why not James Beard's pans?"

To catch the attention of a wide audience, Puck's complicated nature—a very likable blend of self-doubt, pride, ribaldry, competitiveness, curiosity, and great generosity—must be reduced to a cartoon. The company hired the Deutsch advertising agency, which has broadcast the line "Live, love, eat" and put up billboards that blare "Nice tomatoes" and "Kiss a zucchini."

All this is a realization of the vision that Barbara Lazaroff had almost twenty years ago. "The whole idea was to keep focussed on Wolfgang," Joffe says. "He was the brand. That could be hard on Barbara, because this is a woman who could be a brand herself." Lazaroff is a gaudy personality, and she was never comfortable effacing herself. Recently, she has become more assertive about demanding recognition. A few years ago, she and Puck changed the name of their personal holding company from Wolfgang Puck, Inc., to Puck Lazaroff, Inc. And when the landlord of ObaChine in Seattle insisted that Puck's name appear on the restaurant's sign, Lazaroff made sure that when his name went up, hers did, too. "Is it hurtful sometimes? Absolutely," she says. "I spend four years of my life constructing a restaurant, doing the design, finding the craftsmen. It's an enormous amount of work. You

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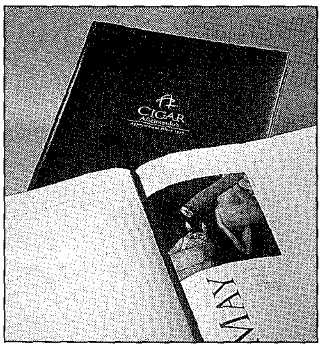
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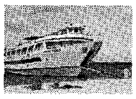
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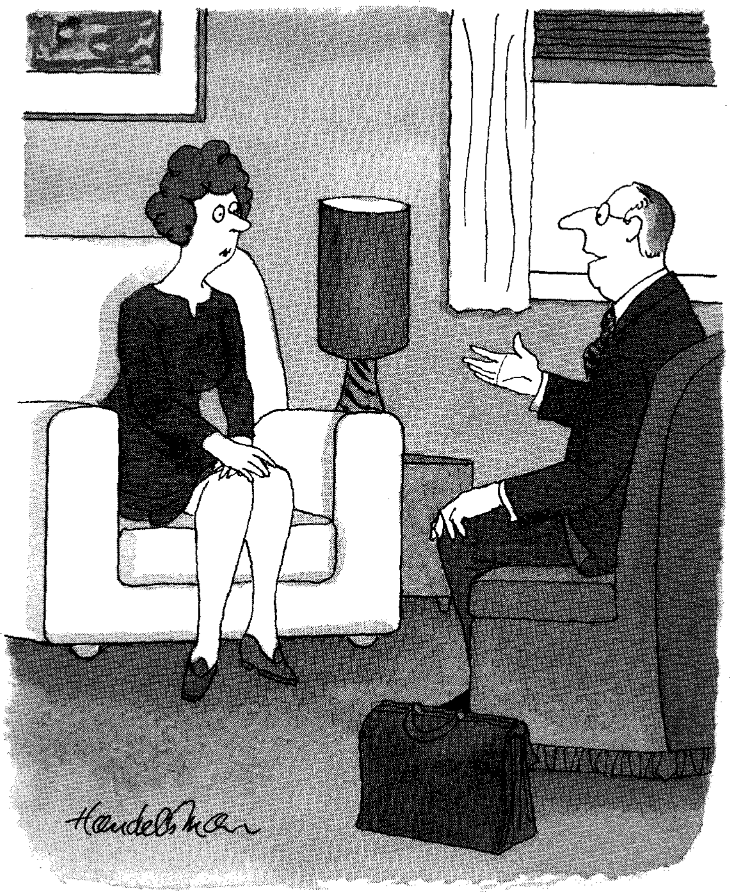

"We cannot write a life policy for your husband, Mrs. Blaine, because he is already dead. In insurance terms, that is considered a preëxisting condition."

make a baby together, and then it's Wolfgang's baby." On the other hand, she points out, "I knew what I was doing," and she realizes that she has no cause to complain. "We are marketing an entity, we are marketing a major culinary talent, we are branding," she says. "It's everything we planned."

IN late July, Puck and Lazaroff were flown to Las Vegas for an evening by Sheldon Adelson, who was breaking ground for a two-billion-dollar hotel, the Venetian. The hotel will contain two, or maybe three, of their restaurants. When Puck opened Spago in Las Vegas, in December of 1992, he was a pioneer; he has since been followed there by many of America's leading chefs, including Mark Miller, Jean-Louis Palladin, and Emeril Lagasse. Thanks to the huge influx of businessmen attending conventions, Las Vegas is a restaurateur's dream town. Spago Las Vegas does twelve million dollars a year in sales, and is the most profitable of Puck's fine-dining restaurants.

On the way to the airport, Puck and Lazaroff traded volleys of badinage.

Lazaroff pointed out an ugly red sore above Puck's right thumb, and told me, "He burned himself, but he doesn't take care of it."

"It's because I like pain," Puck said.

"That's why we're married," Lazaroff said.

"That's because I like suffering," Puck said. "That's different."

On board Adelson's Gulfstream III, Lazaroff stretched out in an armchair and said, "This is the way to travel." After arriving in Las Vegas and greeting Adelson, she quizzed him on the ins and outs of owning private aircraft. Puck kept an amused distance from it all. Although he is extremely competitive, he cares about success rather than about the fruits of success. "Wolfgang is very passionate about what he does, but as far as acquisitions and clothes and needing a big house, he's not that interested," Mark Peel, the original chef de cuisine at Spago, says. Lazaroff, on the other hand, is interested.

In two stretch limousines, the group proceeded to the Venetian preview center, where the chefs marvelled at a detailed mockup of the hotel, which will include "authentic" re-creations of the Doges' Palace (with a casino inside), the Campanile, and the Rialto. When it came time for speeches, a hotel executive described how much historical care had gone into researching Venetian culture, but he did concede that some "artistic license" had been exercised. The final speaker was Adelson, who has the beaming presence of an elderly cherub. "By the time we're built out, we're going to have twenty-five or thirty of the finest brand-name restaurants in the United States," he said. He underlined how proud he was to contribute to Las Vegas's place as "the entertainment capital of the world." He added, more concretely, that the Venetian was expected to contribute a hundred and eighty-seven million dollars a year in local taxes.

After the festivities died down, Puck and Lazaroff took a party of eighteen to Spago for a late dinner. The restaurant is situated in the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace—a remarkable shopping mall, with Roman fountains, strolling gladiators, a sky that goes from dawn to dusk in sixty-minute cycles, and just about every upscale brand-name store you can think of. At ten-thirty, the large dining room of Spago was still mostly full. Before the waiters arrived with smoked-salmon pizzas, crispy calamari, and other familiar Spago dishes, Puck stood up and proposed a toast to his future—to the Food Company restaurants that here and across America should one day not so long from now make him independently wealthy and let him escape the open kitchen. "To the Venetian!" he declaimed. "If we only make ten per cent of the taxes, I'll be happy."

At this auspicious moment, it seemed entirely fitting that Spago Las Vegas is in Caesars Palace. Like the Roman emperors who were declared gods, Puck was on his way to an apotheosis. Serving brand-name food in his brand-name restaurant in the brand-name capital of the world, he himself was becoming a brand. ♦

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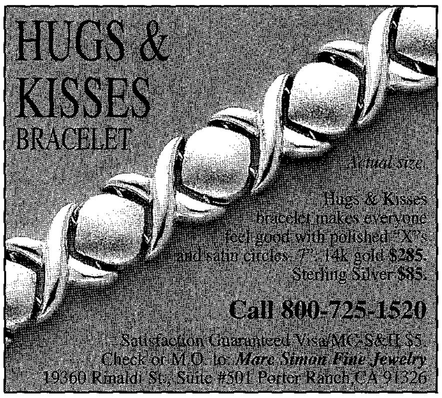

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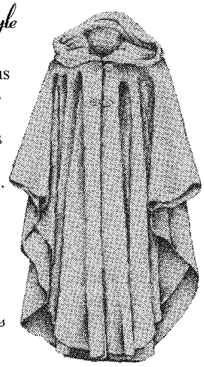

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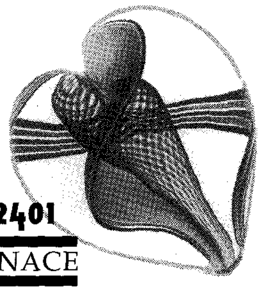

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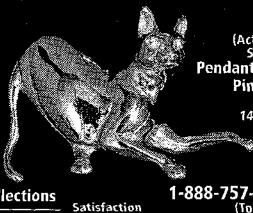

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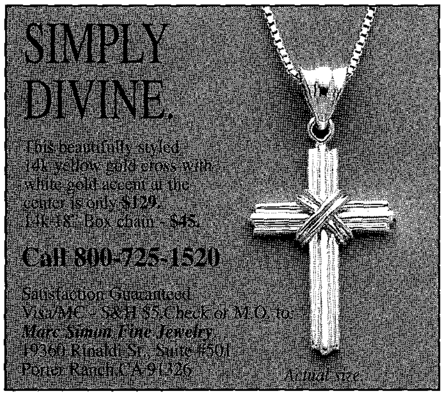
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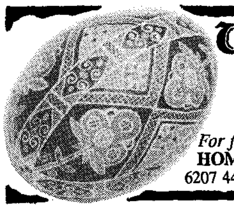
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MEDICAL DISPATCHES

PATHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

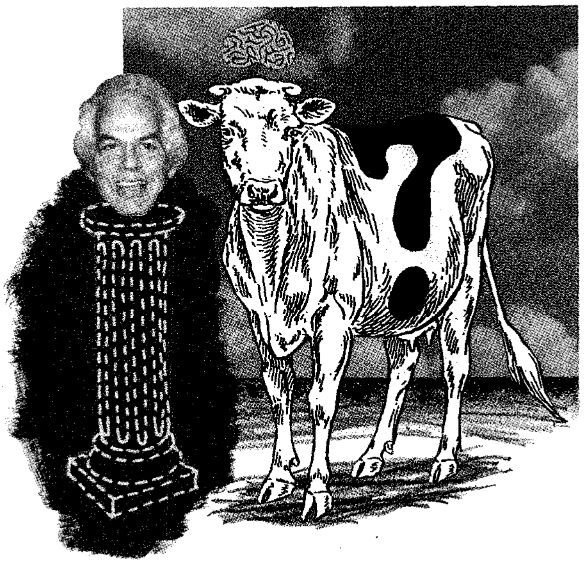
Stanley Prusiner is being awarded a Nobel Prize for his groundbreaking theory about what causes mad-cow disease. But what if he's wrong?

BY RICHARD RHODES

IN Stockholm later this month, with pomp and ceremony, a fifty-five-year-old American neurologist and biochemist named Stanley B. Prusiner will receive the 1997 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. The coveted award—a gold medal, a million dollars, and priceless scientific prestige—is usually divided among two or three candidates; only six times in the past forty years has the Medical Nobel Assembly of Sweden's Karolinska Institute seen fit to award it to one scientist alone. So it is a sweet victory indeed for Prusiner, who is being honored "for his discovery of prions—a new biological principle of infection."

Prusiner's contribution to medical science has been sensational. In 1982, he posited a new kind of infectious agent, unique in nature, to explain the unusual characteristics of a group of rare, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (T.S.E.s)—diseases that kill by damaging the brain with knots of junk protein and tiny holes. In the decade that followed, as he worked to prove his theory, a new previously unknown T.S.E. emerged in an epidemic that panicked millions. The 1985 outbreak in England of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (B.S.E.), commonly known as mad-cow disease, resulted in the slaughter of nearly two million animals. When young people—twenty-one so far—began dying as well, probably infected by eating tainted meat, fears arose of a similar epidemic in human beings. This climate of urgency focussed scientific and public attention on Prusiner's controversial theory that the infectious agent for the T.S.E.s is not a virus or a bacterium but a protein devoid of the nucleic acids DNA and RNA. In Prusiner's coinage, the diseases were caused by a "prion"—a "proteinaceous infectious particle."

Yet the very week the Nobel award was announced two reports in the distinguished British science journal *Nature* offered further clues that a virus might be the carrier of T.S.E. infection. Despite Prusiner's insistence that the puzzle has been solved, the last word has not yet been written about the prion's role in causing such diseases.


Opposing Prusiner's research are scientists who point to tantalizing hints that a virus is involved.

GENE GREIF

In fact, by awarding the prize to Prusiner this year the fifty-three Karolinska scientists who make up the Medical Nobel Assembly explicitly took his side in an ongoing debate—a debate that may have profound consequences for future research. Ralf Pettersson, the deputy chairman of the Nobel Assembly, clearly understands the stakes, and he has even implied that persistent skepticism about prions had contributed to the spread of B.S.E. to human beings. "During the whole of the nineteen-eighties," he told Reuters in October, "the prion was very controversial. Acceptance took a while. This could have delayed moves. It was more a political decision"—in Britain—"about when to take action, and by then it was too late." And the Karolinska neurologist Lars Edstrom was dismissive of skeptics when he spoke to the *Times* upon the announcement of the prize. "There are still people who don't believe that a protein can cause these diseases, but we believe it. From our point of view, there is no doubt."

The tone of these endorsements offends many researchers in the field, including the neuropathologist Laura Manuelidis, a Yale Medical School professor, whose own research on spongiform encephalopathies has turned up tantalizing hints of a virus. "No doubt?" she said recently, in New Haven. "How could there be no doubt? Is this science?" Although some of her colleagues cede more ground to Prusiner, by her count only four of the fourteen major T.S.E.-research labs that actually work on the infectious agent wholeheartedly espouse prion theory; nine others consider it unlikely, and one is undecided.

Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies—cruel, untreatable, and invariably fatal maladies—incubate silently for years before finding their way to the brain, where they eventually signal their presence with ataxia and tremors that progress within weeks or months to dementia, coma, and death. Prusiner and a Zurich colleague, Charles Weissmann, showed that infection depends on the presence in the brain of a protein they called PrP, which all mammals make. (They did so by knocking out the gene in mice that makes PrP and then trying to infect them; without PrP, the mice didn't get sick.) In the course of infection, the normal PrP protein changes into a diseased form that typically accumulates in damaging knots called amyloid plaques. Prusiner later postulated a role for a still unidentified "Protein X" in the deformation of healthy PrP. Ultimately the assault leads to spongiform damage—a stipple of microscopic holes that develops as the brain reacts to infection.

The first human epidemic of a T.S.E. occurred among the Fore people of Papua New Guinea beginning in the nineteen-twenties. They called the illness kuru. An American pediatrician and virologist named Carleton Gajdusek won the 1976 Nobel in Medicine for proving that kuru was infectious; by then, anthropologists had established that the mode of infection was the Fore practice of cannibalizing their dead relatives. When, beginning in 1985, bovine spongiform encephalopathy began decimating British cattle—it was spread by what Gajdusek calls the "high-tech neo-cannibalism" of feeding cattle protein supplements cooked down from slaughterhouse waste—scientists invoked Gajdusek's work among the Fore to warn a skeptical British Government that B.S.E. might pass to human beings.

Prusiner, who studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and has spent his career in the University of California system, began working on spongiform encephalopathies in 1972, after one of his patients died of a rare human T.S.E., Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (C.J.D.). In the late seventies, Prusiner focussed his research on infectious proteins, and during the last two decades his laboratory—a well-funded one, at the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine—has published a hundred and eighty papers on T.S.E.s. Prusiner stopped talking to journalists in 1986, however, after a skeptical magazine story by the science reporter Gary Taubes.

One of the scientists Taubes mentioned was Patricia Merz, who studied the sheep form of spongiform encephalopathy, called scrapie, with Henry Wisniewski at the New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities. In 1978, after four years spent teaching herself to use the electron microscope, Merz identified little whiskers—what she called scrapie-associated fibrils (S.A.F.)—in magnified samples of infected mouse and hamster brains. The fibrils showed up only in diseased samples, never in healthy controls, and the more infective the samples were, the more of these fibrils she found scattered across the glowing green screen of her microscope. Merz and her colleagues reported this discovery in a German pathology journal in 1981. In 1982, Prusiner announced that he had purified a protein that tracked with infectivity. A year later, he reported that the protein took the form of "rod-shaped particles," which he named "prion rods." Citing Merz's work, Prusiner allowed that it remained to be established "whether or not these fibrils represent an elongated form of the prion rods." According to Merz, antibody tests later performed by her lab-

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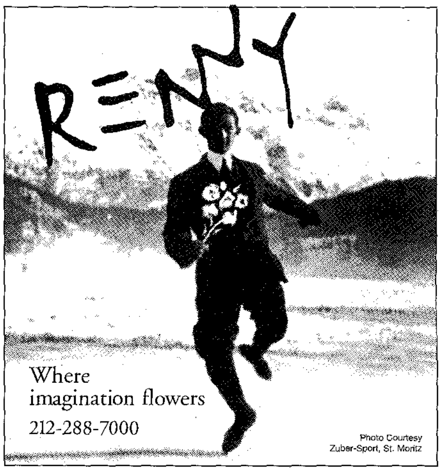

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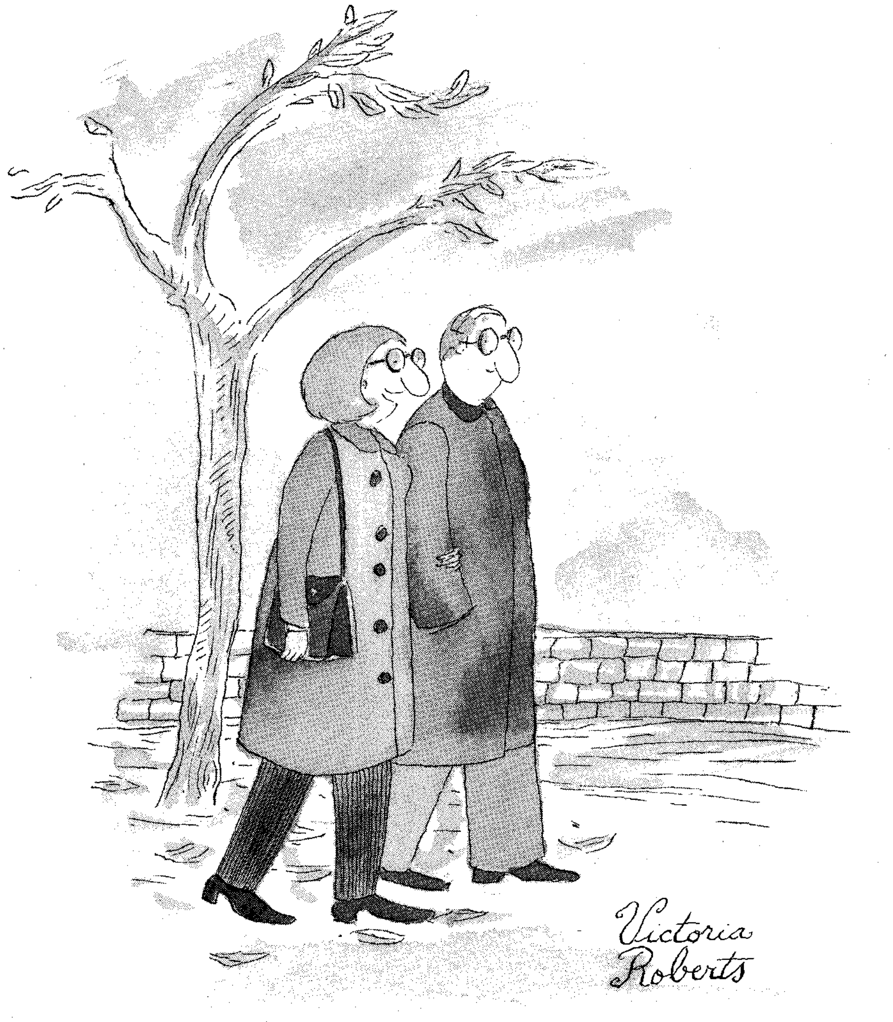
oratory demonstrated that Prusiner's prion rods and her fibrils were one and the same. Prusiner has maintained that her data were "unconvincing and inconclusive." Nevertheless, the presence of these fibrils is now an accepted laboratory test of T.S.E. infection; when mad-cow disease first appeared in England, one of the ways British scientists confirmed that it was a spongiform encephalopathy was by finding rod-shaped proteins in infected cow brains. Significantly, however, Merz isn't convinced that protein alone carries infection. She thinks that the protein rods—call them fibrils, prions, or whatever—probably contain a nucleic acid.

The great leap that Prusiner has made with prion theory is to deduce from the association between protein and T.S.E.s that the protein causes the disease. He came to this conclusion after he and others demonstrated that applying chemicals and treatments known to damage nucleic acids didn't make T.S.E.-tainted material less infectious, whereas treatments known to damage protein did block or reduce infections. Prusiner and others also searched infected brain samples for viral nucleic acid and failed to find it. Yet, as I emphasized in my recent book "Deadly Feasts," none of these experiments is conclusive: reducing infectivity by a process that damages protein may prove only that protein is a gatekeeper for the illness; failing to reduce infectivity by a process that damages nucleic acid may simply demonstrate that the nucleic acid can be repaired.

On the other hand, the best evidence for a viral cause of T.S.E.s is that these diseases—just like flu and cold viruses—come in different strains, which reveal themselves in different signs and symptoms. Such distinctive strain characteristics "breed true"—that is, produce the same effects as they pass from host to host. One of the *Nature* papers published this October, for example, from a team headed by Moira Bruce, of the Institute



"Our life is sort of like a bad play, but somehow we've managed to get good reviews."

for Animal Health, in Edinburgh, identified the same strain of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in eight different species. Yet mouse PrP has a different amino-acid sequence from cat PrP, and it, in turn, is different from human PrP. So Bruce's findings raise the question: how could eight different kinds of PrP all specify for the same strain?

George Klein, a respected senior scientist at the Karolinska, who has chaired the Nobel Assembly in past years and is an old friend of Carleton Gajdusek, is a prion proponent. "The T.S.E.s aren't my field," he said recently, "but I was convinced one day years ago when Carleton held up a blackened test tube at a lecture—blackened by exposure to hard radiation—and explained that the scrapie agent was still alive inside. Radiation damages nucleic acid, of course—that's why radiation can be dangerous. That isn't the only line of evidence, but it's compelling." Yet Laura Manuelidis is quick to dismiss the radiation argument, pointing out that many viruses are efficient at repairing radiation damage to their genome.

At a conference in Paris in 1995, Manuelidis told T.S.E. researchers that, despite the prion bandwagon, almost everything about the T.S.E.s points to a "slow virus" (so called because of the long incubation periods), with PrP acting as a gatekeeper at some stage in the organism's life cycle: the fact of infection, the variety of strains, and the agent's persistence through long periods (when cells normally "clear" proteins quickly), together with what Manuelidis called the "hallmark of an infectious agent"—its transmission across species barriers.

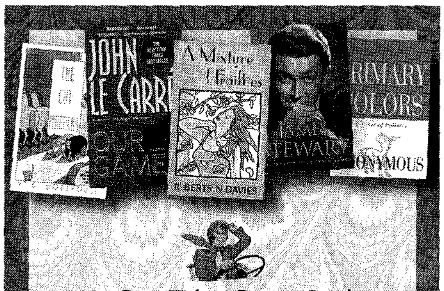
Prion proponents point out that viruses, which come wrapped in proteins of their own, can normally be traced through the antibodies that an immune system generates to attack those foreign proteins, but that the T.S.E. agent has not been seen to evoke this inflammatory response. In July, 1997, however, Manuelidis reported finding "several inflammatory host reactions" in rats she had infected with the new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease that had begun killing young people in Great Britain. Well before that discovery, in 1983, British researchers Alan Dickinson and G.W. Outram proposed that the T.S.E. agent might be what they called a "virino"—a small piece of naked nucleic acid that wraps itself in a host protein, and thus evades the immune system. (Some plant diseases, called viroids, consist of naked DNA.)

Taken together, Prusiner's experiments demonstrate at least that PrP is crucial to T.S.E. infection. Yet if protein alone is responsible for T.S.E., people at several different laboratories told me, then it ought to be possible to synthesize PrP in a test tube and cause infection. That's the Holy Grail of prion research. But it's been tried, so far without success. Nevertheless, Prusiner believes that with more research it's only a matter of time.

There's plenty of nucleic acid in the brain samples that researchers study, but picking out viral fragments among all the cell debris would be like searching for a needle in a haystack. If they're going to be found, they'll have to be painstakingly detected almost molecule by molecule—but hardly anyone is looking. The lion's share of research money is now directed toward prions. (Prusiner's lab has received about forty million dollars over the years.)

The virus-versus-protein debate would be merely curious if a fatal epidemic disease weren't involved. Officially, a hundred and sixty-eight thousand British cattle have sickened with B.S.E. since the disease was first identified, in 1986, and the actual toll probably exceeds a million. If B.S.E. is indeed transmissible through eating meat, anyone who ate British beef in the nineteen-eighties may have been exposed. In 1989, new regulations on cattle feed were imposed. And yet until this year sheep were allowed to eat the same rendered slaughterhouse waste that seems to have spread the disease in cows. In theory, therefore, the British may have been exposed to bovine spongiform encephalopathy from mutton and lamb seven years longer than they were from beef.

Earlier this year, John Collinge, who is a member of the British Government's Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, confirmed Bruce's chilling new evidence that bovine spongiform encephalopathy may indeed have spread to humans in the form of the new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (nvC.J.D.) which was also presented in her October *Nature* report. Before the first human deaths occurred, in 1995, Collinge had genetically engineered mice to make only human PrP and then had inoculated them with B.S.E. Now he reported that after some two years of silent incubation they had begun to develop the disease—



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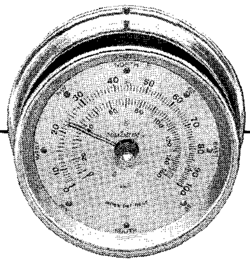

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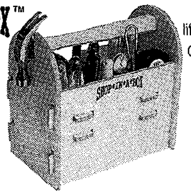

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Keep it under your hat, the saying went
when we wore hats. And secrets "dissipate"
(in this poem the verb means to leave the pate)
like body heat. And some secrets can't quit
memory fast enough for human good;
viz., what my friend's wife's kisses tasted like

and why I didn't sleep with her, for all
her vernal allure. Did we need to read
in transcript each taped word of Nixon's
contempt for us, like preserved globs of spit?
Don't double-click on the Save icon
(a piggy bank? a jumbled attic?)

until you've thought how much a fossil fuel
has to forget fossil to become fuel,
or how much childhood we plow under.
"Tears, idle tears," the poet wrote, but they've
got their work cut out for them, the way
a river might imagine a canyon.

—William Matthews
(1942-1997)

one distinctive sign being that the mice began to walk backward.

In the light of these results, Collinge, a prion enthusiast, now fears a "Europe-wide" epidemic of nvC.J.D., "with tens of thousands of cases." Because projecting the size of any epidemic requires tracking a trend line over several years, however, it will be at least the year 2000 before statisticians can make reliable estimates.

Tony Blair's Labour Government moved, in June, soon after its election, to extend to sheep the controls on feed instituted for cattle in 1989, although no cases of B.S.E. in sheep have been reported. Earlier this year, the United States Food and Drug Administration prohibited the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animal feeds for cows, sheep, and goats. The ban, however, excluded blood, blood products, gelatin, milk, milk products, pig and horse protein, and inspected meat products offered cooked for human consumption, including restaurant and institutional plate waste—an exclusion, in sum, big enough to drive a cortège of hearses through. Both gelatin and blood are still suspect, according to a National Institutes of Health research physician named Paul Brown, who chairs the agency's T.S.E. Advisory Committee. (Stanley Prusiner is also a member.) The only certain way to avoid a food-borne T.S.E. epidemic in human beings, in fact, is to ban entirely the feeding of animal protein to animals. Yet under the most recent F.D.A. guidelines animal feed in the United States may also still contain rendered material from such sources as the cats and dogs euthanized by veterinarians and in pounds, mink carcasses after the valuable fur is removed, and large animals such as road-killed deer. All these species are susceptible to T.S.E. infection.

The steps being taken to prevent contamination of livestock feed make sense under either theory of T.S.E. transmission. But future efforts aimed at preventing and treating spongiform encephalopathies hinge on the scientific theory of infection. That may be why Bruce Chesebro, an articulate physician who directs T.S.E. studies at the National Institutes of Health's Rocky Mountain Laboratories, in Hamilton, Montana, took the unusual step of making a public objection when Stanley Prusiner's Nobel was announced. In a sharply worded press release he noted that "no one to date knows precisely what a 'prion' really is," and then made clear why the virus-versus-protein debate is important. Clumps of abnormal protein, he pointed out, are also characteristic of diseases such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis. Why should the prion be uniquely transmissible when other such amyloids aren't? "These unresolved issues leave open the possibility that an undiscovered virus might yet prove to be the true agent of the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies," he wrote. Chesebro thought it would be "tragic to stifle the future research needed to identify the precise nature of the transmissible agent responsible for these diseases or to impede the search for drugs required to prevent or cure them."

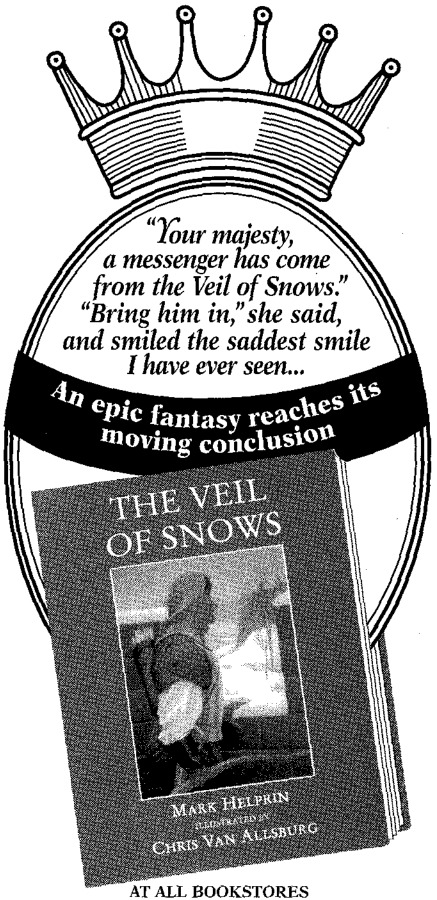
Research is only beginning on early detection and possible treatment of T.S.E.s. If the disease agent is viral in nature, then eventually a vaccine might be developed that could prevent infection. If the disease agent is, as Prusiner maintains, a malformation of a normal cellular protein, then finding a way to thwart it is a much more difficult challenge, since all mammals are born with PrP genes. One clear outcome: Prusiner's Nobel Prize will enlarge his influence on the future of T.S.E. research; if he chooses to encourage a full range of studies—including continuing to search for a virus—that work will go forward.

PRUSINER'S work, for all its energy and ambition, may yet turn out to be an example of what the Nobel-laureate chemist Irving Langmuir once called "pathological science." Langmuir, who died in 1957, made a hobby of collecting sensational scientific "discoveries" that turned out to be false—not fraudulent but merely self-deluded. Cold fusion, which came and went a decade ago, is probably the best-known recent example; if Langmuir had still been around, he would certainly have put it in his list. In a talk he gave in 1953, he offered the example of the French physicist René-Prosper Blondlot. In 1903, Blondlot announced that he had discovered "N rays," which were supposed to be something like X rays, except that they were given off by such common objects as human bodies, bricks, and tables, and made them easier to see in the dark. Once Blondlot had reported his discovery, other scientists looked for N rays and also found them—that is, until a skeptic came along and covertly pocketed a crucial piece of apparatus, an aluminum prism, while the French physicist was measuring N-ray intensities. Since the room was dark, Blondlot didn't realize he'd been sabotaged, and went right on announcing his measurements; the skeptic later gleefully reported this to the world.

Pathological science raises deep questions about human perception, Langmuir told his audience, and he went on to say charitably, "These are cases where there is no dishonesty involved but where people are tricked into false results by a lack of understanding about what human beings can do to themselves in the way of being led astray by subjective effects, wishful thinking or threshold interactions. . . . These are things that attracted a great deal of attention. Usually hundreds of papers have been published on them. Sometimes they have lasted for fifteen or twenty years and then they gradually have died away."

Extracting what his cases had in common, Langmuir offered a list called "Symptoms of Pathological Science," and those symptoms fit surprisingly well with the current state of prion theory. Most tellingly, a pathological case was likely to involve "fantastic theories contrary to experience"—a phrase that certainly describes the notion that the prion, alone among infectious agents, does not contain nucleic acid. Another symptom was that "criticisms are met by *ad hoc* excuses thought up on the spur of the moment," which might well characterize Prusiner's response to the dilemma of different T.S.E. strains: the postulate that the PrP molecule can fold itself in a variety of ways that correspond to different forms of the disease. "The effect is barely detectable" also applies; in fact, since no one has demonstrated that prions are infective—the Holy Grail test—Prusiner's theory has yet to cross this threshold. So far, his effect isn't detectable at all.

A special irony is that the virus-versus-protein showdown has happened before. Until Francis Crick and James Watson proved, in 1953, that nucleic acid was organized to carry genetic information, the leading candidate for that crucial role was protein. Proteins lost out to nucleic acids the last time. Now, despite the Nobel Assembly's precipitous expression of faith, the book of nature still gives the double helix better odds. ♦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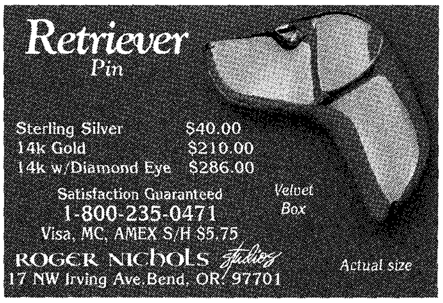
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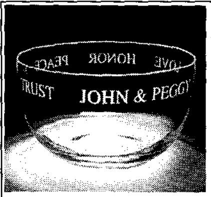
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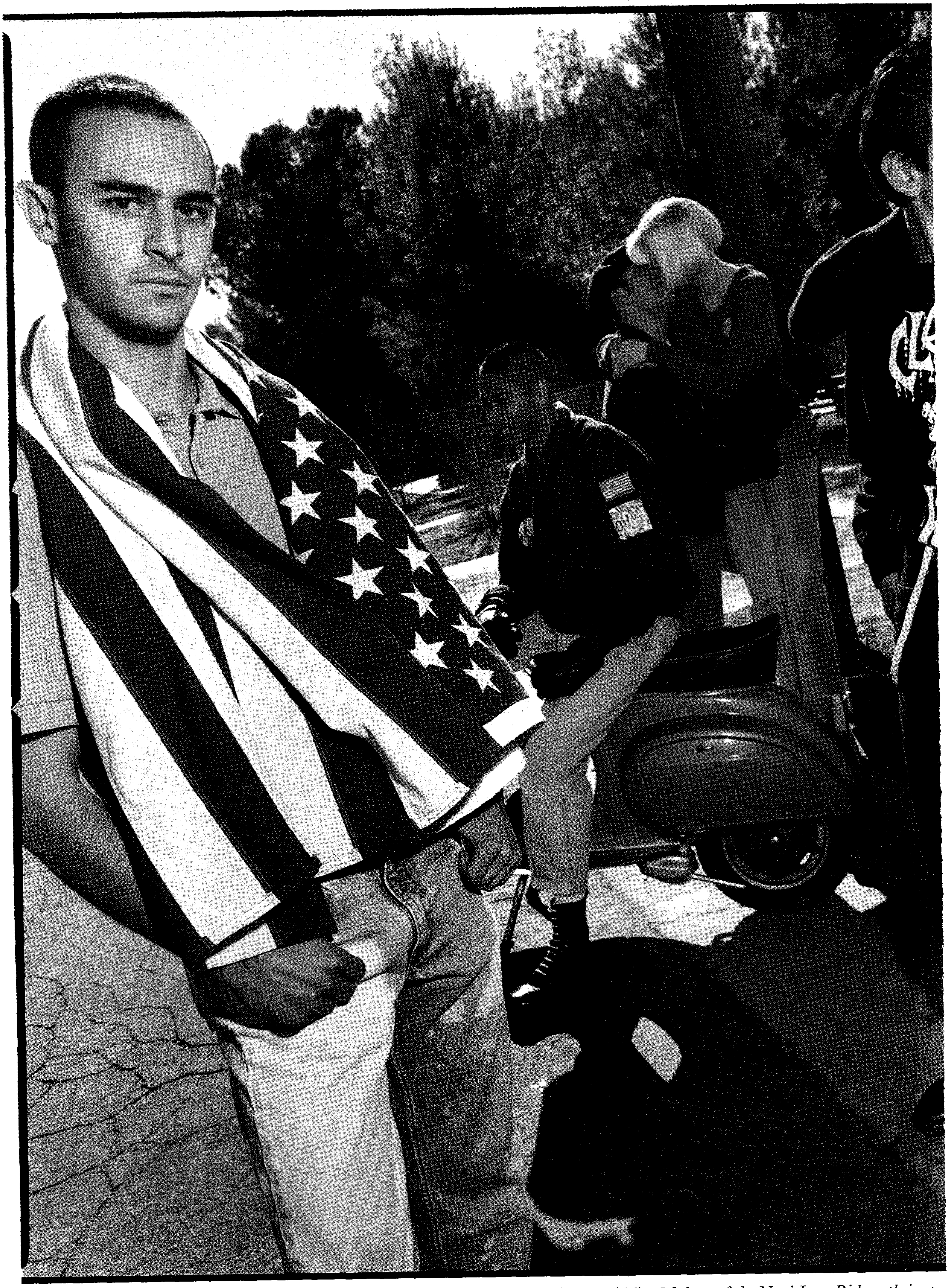
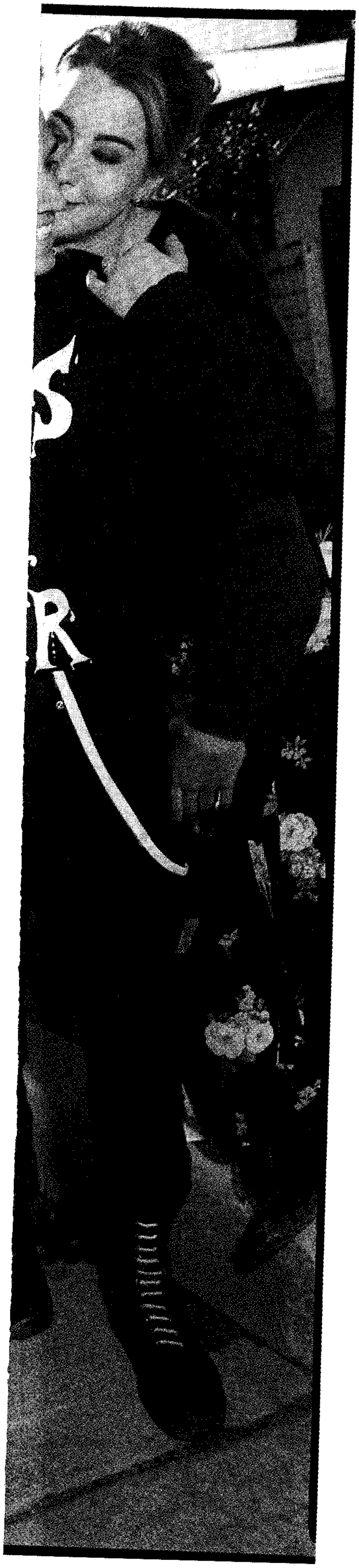


Johnny Suttle and other Sharps ("skinheads against racial prejudice"), and (opposite) Tim Malone of the Nazi Low Riders: their stre



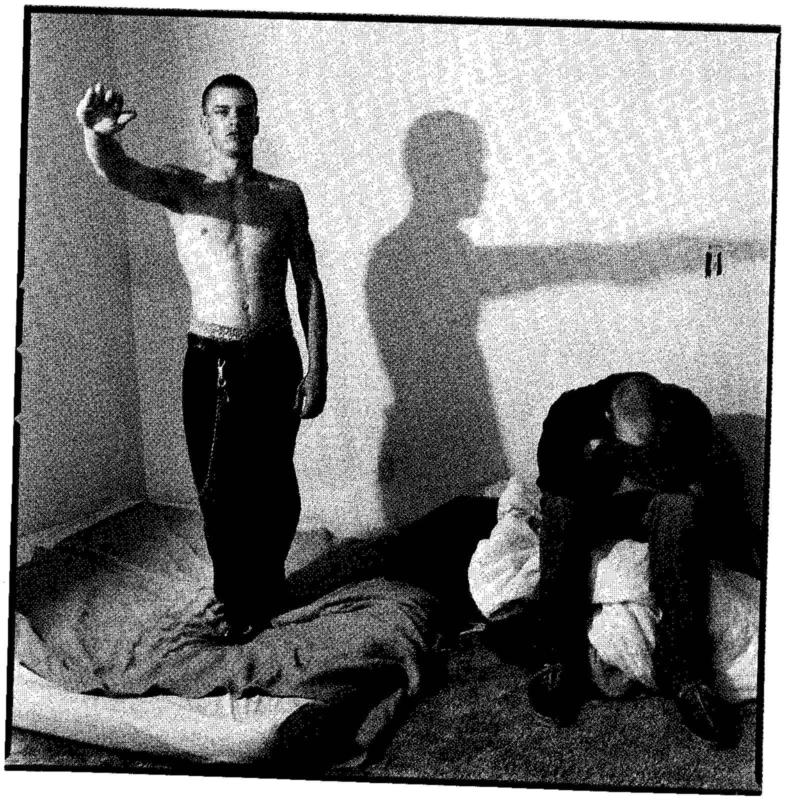
hting ended in an ugly killing.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE UNWANTED

In a Los Angeles suburb where schools and parents faltered, the American Dream was replaced by drugs, neo-Nazism, and despair. The hardest hit were Mindy Turner and her friends.

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN



FILM companies used to come to the Antelope Valley, in northern Los Angeles County, to shoot high-desert scenes. It was empty country, a good backdrop for Westerns. Now they come when they need to burn down or blow up a housing tract. In 1992, for the fiery climax of "Lethal Weapon 3," Warner Bros. used a development called the Legends, at Avenue J and Thirtieth Street West, in the city of Lancaster. The Legends had become available after its financing failed, leaving unfinished forty-eight large, Spanish-style homes, each named after a legendary American (Babe Ruth, Marilyn Monroe). Mel Gibson and Danny Glover went on a memorable rampage through the tract. When I drove through its curving streets last year, I found a wasteland (tumbleweeds, shopping carts, graffiti-covered sofas) surrounded by a high brown wall.

The transformation of the Antelope Valley from rural desert into modern suburbia—with neighborhoods, literally, to burn—was very sudden, a historical jump cut. In 1980, the combined population of Lancaster and Palmdale, the Valley's two main cities, was sixty thousand. By 1994, their combined population was two hundred and twenty-two thousand, and today estimates of the Valley's total population range as high as four hundred thousand. This hyper-expansion was first sparked by housing prices in Los Angeles and its nearer suburbs, which soared during the nineteen-eighties, and by white flight from an increasingly Latino and Asian city. The Antelope Valley had been considered too remote for commuters, but

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY ELLEN MARK

the completion of the Antelope Valley Freeway, snaking over the San Gabriel Mountains, helped change that. In the Antelope Valley, one could buy for two hundred thousand dollars a new house that might cost four hundred thousand in the San Fernando Valley. What was more, the air was cleaner and the streets were safer. The commute to jobs in the city was longer—an hour longer, at least, each way—but that was the trade-off. And so it was that the desert brought forth swimming pools and convenience stores beyond number, and wide empty streets as far as the eye could see.

Then, in 1990, the Southern California economy, staggered by cutbacks in the aerospace and defense industries, fell into a deep recession. Los Angeles County alone lost more than half a million jobs, and property values throughout the region collapsed. In the Antelope Valley, abandoned housing tracts began to dot the subdivided desert. Boarded-up shopping centers and bankrupt school districts followed, along with a wave of personal financial disasters so severe that *USA Today* dubbed Palmdale "the foreclosure capital of California."

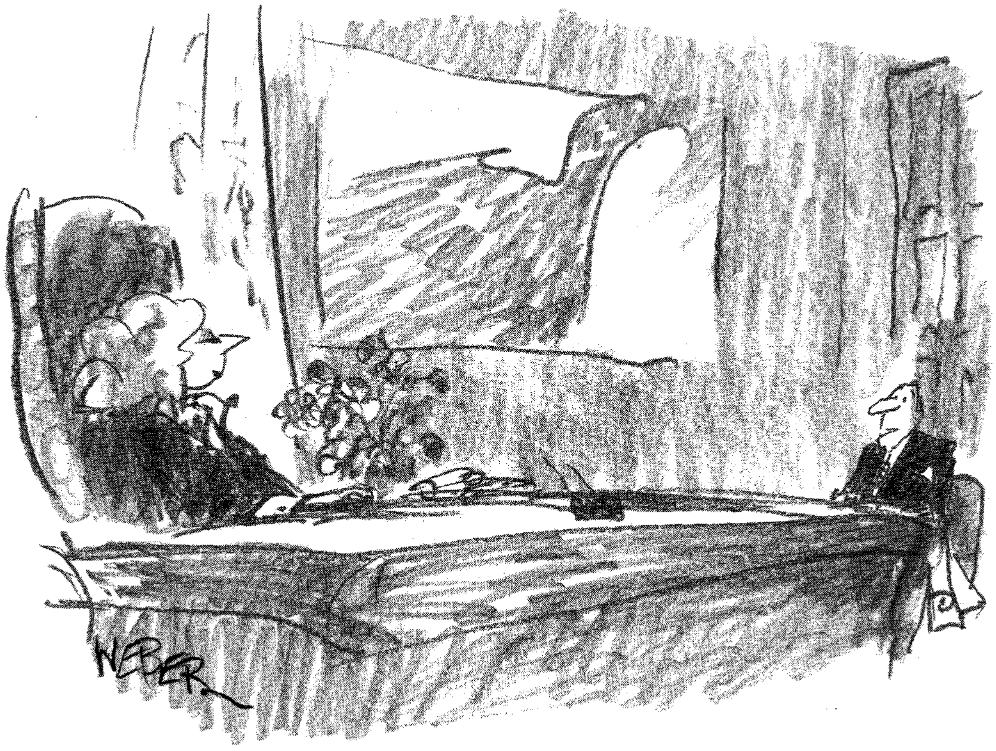
And yet the Antelope Valley's population has continued to grow. Between 1990 and 1994, Palmdale was the second-fastest-growing city in the United States, Lancaster the sixth-fastest. As a rule, the Valley's newest residents are poorer and darker than their predecessors, live in more crowded lodgings, and are more likely to rent. Still, the Valley remains, in a county where whites are a minority, overwhelmingly white (sixty-eight per cent), home-owning, and politically dominated by conservative Republicans of the pro-growth, antitax stripe. And the reasons most people give for moving out from the city—less crime, less smog, cheaper housing—have not changed. The Valley remains particularly attractive to families with children. Indeed, it has been called "the last great breeding ground of Southern California."

For anyone who has spent time there lately, this is a scary thought—if only because growing up these days in the Antelope Valley seems to be, for many kids, a pretty harrowing, dispiriting affair. This may be true today of growing up in America generally, but the Valley's supersonic growth has led to overcrowded, often chaotic schools; according to the high-school district's superintendent, nearly forty-five per cent of the entering students do not finish with their class. The teen-pregnancy rate is also alarmingly high. Juvenile crime is a major problem, usually attributed to "unsupervised children"—to, that is, the huge number of kids whose parents can't afford after-school care and often don't return from their epic commutes until long after dark. With neighborhoods devoid of adults from early morning to night, the most popular youth crime is, naturally, burglary. A sheriff's-department spokesman in Lancaster estimated that fully half the Valley's children are unsupervised after school. He also said that there are now, not coincidentally, more than two hundred youth gangs represented in the Valley.

I GREW up, a generation ago, in Woodland Hills, then an outer suburb of L.A., and when I started spending time with teen-agers in the Antelope Valley I figured I had a head start on understanding their world. As it turned out, my youth might as well have been spent in Kathmandu for all the clues it gave me in this new realm. There was a street war raging in Lancaster between a white-supremacist skinhead gang known as the Nazi Low Riders and a rival gang of antiracist skinheads who called themselves Sharps. This obscure, semi-doctrinal conflict fascinated me long before it escalated to homicide, as it eventually did. And yet no adult, I discovered, could shed any real light on it. I needed a native guide, and I found one in Mindy Turner, who, at seventeen, was already well embarked on the kind of casually terrifying existence I was starting to regard as common.

She was living with her mother, her younger brother, and an older half brother in a four-bedroom white stucco ranch-style house in Lancaster. Her mother, Debbie, worked behind the counter at Thrifty Drugs; she had bought the house with the settlement she got after her husband, a crane operator, was electrocuted on the job in 1989, when Mindy was in elementary school. Mindy recalled, "They came to get me at school and said, 'Your dad's gone to be with your dog and your grandpa in Heaven.' I've never gotten over it. Whenever I get sad, I start thinking about it and just cry."

Debbie remembered Mindy being deeply troubled by the idea that her dad had never been baptized, and thought that that was probably why Mindy later became a Mormon—because she wanted to be baptized herself. Actually, before Mindy became a Mormon she had wanted to become Jewish. But that had turned out to be too much work. Becoming a Mormon was



"You seem to know something about law. I like that in an attorney."

relatively easy. All this was before Mindy got addicted to crystal methamphetamine and became a Nazi, in the ninth grade.

Mindy and her mother shared blond good looks, but Debbie was hearty and outgoing, while Mindy was pale, fashionably thin, moody, intense. Her manner oscillated with unnerving speed—from jaded worldliness to girlish enthusiasm, from precocious grace to gawkiness, from thuggish cynicism to tender vulnerability. She spoke in quick, fluid bursts, as if she had to express each thought before she changed her mind.

In her mother's day, Mindy's looks might have made her a homecoming queen. But Mindy stopped going to school while she was in the tenth grade. "I'm not a people person," she told me. "I didn't like all the little gossip circles that went on there."

Mindy had always been a good student, earning B's, but had slipped academically in junior high (as a disturbingly high number of American girls do). In the seventh and eighth grades, she became first a "hesher"—into heavy-metal music and smoking marijuana—and then a "hippie," into reggae and smoking marijuana. She also became sexually active. Her lovers were mostly older; some were much older. "I was kind of looking for a father," she told me.

Mindy's Nazi period had various sources. Spike Lee had helped get her into it, she said. She and a friend had gone to see "Malcolm X." They found they were the only whites in the audience, and a black guy had asked them sarcastically if they were in the right theatre. "That's why I hate Spike Lee," she told me. "Because he's a racist. And that's when I started thinking, If the black kids can wear 'X' caps, and Malcolm is calling us all 'white devils,' what's wrong with being down with white power?"

Her real political inspiration, though, was methamphetamine, which is also known as crank, crystal, ice, or simply speed. The leading illegal drug in the Valley, methamphetamine is a powerful addictive stimulant whose longtime consumers tend to suffer from paranoia, depression, hallucinations, and violent rages. The Nazi Low Riders were one of Mindy's speed connections. "They're all tweakers," she told me. (Tweakers are speed addicts.) "Speed is just so cheap here. And it makes you feel so powerful, so alert."

The N.L.R.s' hangout was the Malone household, in a run-down neighborhood in downtown Lancaster. Andrea Malone, a single parent, had three teenage boys, all white-supremacist skinheads, and she worked long hours, giving the kids the run of the house. Mindy, who had grown bored with Mormonism, became a regular there, snorting speed, smoking dope, and becoming fast friends with the N.L.R.s. They called her a "skin bitch," but she refused to shave her head. "My dad always said he loved my long blond hair, so I wouldn't cut it off," she told me. She and the other N.L.R. girls ("They called us Property of the N.L.R.s, not members. It's this weird thing") fought with girls from rival gangs, including Sharps. But Mindy claimed she'd never taken part in random attacks on black people—something the N.L.R.s specialized in. "I just used to sit in the car and watch, while they'd get out and be, like, 'Go back to Africa, nigger,' and beat people up."

At first, Mindy's mother had no idea what was going on. "I talked to Mrs. Malone on the phone a few times," Debbie told me. "She seemed really nice. I used to drive Mindy over there, and the Malone kids and some of the others used to come over here. I knew they were prejudiced, but as long as they acted civilized they were welcome. I even took them roller-skating."

The N.L.R.s were into tattoos: swastikas, skulls, Iron Crosses, lightning bolts—though lightning bolts were permitted to be worn only by those who had killed a black person. Mindy got a big swastika on one hip. ("My mom got really mad when she saw it.") Her skinhead friends were also into guns. In early 1995, one of her boyfriends, Jaxon Stines, drove with a group of N.L.R.s by the house of another boy whom Mindy had been seeing, and fired shots through a bedroom window, aiming for the other boy's bed. No one was hurt, but Mindy was picked up by the police for questioning, and Jaxon pleaded guilty to attempted murder.

Debbie was by then deeply alarmed about the company her daughter was keeping. Mindy was severely strung out—a full-tilt tweaker, with a daily habit. She had lost a lot of weight. She rarely slept. Finally, she became so dehydrated that she had to be hospitalized.

While she detoxed, with her mother keeping her skinhead friends away, Mindy seemed to snap out of her gang-girl trance. "I just realized I didn't hate black people," she told me. "Also, I'm totally infatuated with Alicia Silverstone, and she's Jewish. I've seen 'Clueless' like eleven times. So how could I be a Nazi?"

But the N.L.R.s did not take apostasy lightly. "They started calling my house, saying they were going to kick my ass. They started driving by here, throwing bottles at the house." Two N.L.R. girls, Heather Michaels and Angela Jackson, were particularly incensed. "Angela said she was coming over here to kill me. I was scared, but I told her, 'Fine, come over, whatever.' But she never came. Heather, especially, is really, really mad at me. They all say I'm a race traitor."

Debbie Turner took measures. She had an electronic security system installed around the house. "It got really bad after Jaxon went to jail," she told me. "They started coming by here. I was afraid they were going to shoot at the house. It was very scary." Debbie was also paying for a series of painful, expensive laser procedures to remove Mindy's swastika tattoo. The final cost for erasing the tattoo would come to four thousand dollars.

And that was how Debbie and I talked about Mindy's tour with the N.L.R.s during my first visits to the Turners' house—as a nasty accident whose scars were now being, not without cost, erased. Mindy was even back in school, through an independent-study program.

At the same time, we all knew that things were more complicated. For one thing, Jaxon had been released, after just six months in jail, and he and Mindy were seeing each other again. "Me and Jaxon have been through so much together," she told me. For example, a few weeks after her seventeenth birthday, she had had an abortion. "I wanted to keep it," Mindy said. "Because I knew that if Jaxon and I ever broke up I would still have some communication with him, because we would have a kid together. But then we decided we just weren't mentally ready for it. We fight all the time. And I was afraid that if we had a kid and Jaxon stayed friends with those people the kid would be brought up around all that hate."

Jaxon's gang status was actually ambiguous. He hung out with the N.L.R.s, and they considered him one of them, but he didn't publicly "claim" N.L.R. In any event, his association with the N.L.R.s extended no automatic protection to Mindy. She had therefore turned to the antiracist Sharps, her erstwhile enemies, for protection. The Sharps, however, were in no particular hurry to help her—leaving her in an even more vulnerable position.

She and Jaxon did indeed fight all the time, about almost anything. Raves, for example. Mindy indicated a poster on the wall in her bedroom, advertising something called the Insomniac Rave. "That was so great," she said. "It was the first real rave I went to. Dang! It was in Hollywood. Raves are like big parties, with all different races dancing. I took Ecstasy at the Insomniac Rave, and I danced all night." She sighed. "Jaxon can't stand it that I go to raves," she said. "He says I don't act white. But what is acting white? Me and him have been getting drunk almost every night lately, and I ask him, 'What do you think black people do that's so different from whites? They just sit around getting drunk and listening to music. Drive around in cars. Just like us.' "

KICKING around teen-age Lancaster, I sometimes felt as if I had fallen in with a thousand little cultural commissars, young suburban ideologues whose darkest pronouncement on another kid—a kid deviating from, say, the hard-core-punk-anarchist line on some band or arcane point of dress—was, inevitably, "He's confused."

Mindy's own "beliefs," as she called them, were eclectic. Her brave and principled rejection of racism, even her devotion to Alicia Silverstone, did not mean she had embraced enlightened liberalism in all matters. She still had a soft spot for Adolf Hitler—she claimed she was the only N.L.R. to actually study "Mein Kampf"—and her all-time-favorite "leader" was still Charles Manson. "My mom thinks I'm sick, but I think he's cute," she told me. "In a weird, gross way, I think he's attractive. He has the real fuck-you blood. He acts as his own lawyer. He talks for himself. I've read some of 'Helter Skelter.' I wouldn't, like, buy a poster of him and put it up. My mom wouldn't let me do it if I tried. But I don't think it would fit my room, anyway, with all my nice John Lennon and Beatles stuff."

The walls in Mindy's room were indeed adorned with Beatles posters. Her father, she said, had been a big John Lennon fan. But she also loved Trent Reznor, of Nine Inch Nails, whose best-known lyric was "I wanna fuck you like an animal!" I asked about a framed photograph, set next to her bed, of a shirtless, tattooed young man. The picture was obviously taken in prison.

"That's Madness," she said. "He's twenty-three. He says he's in love with me, but he knows I can't get over Jaxon. He's in for armed robbery. I didn't know him too well before he went to jail, but then we started writing letters. He's S.F.V. Peckerwood."

The Peckerwoods are a white gang, known mainly for mindless violence and methamphetamine dealing. They're big in the Antelope Valley but, some say, they're bigger in the San Fernando Valley, or S.F.V. They're biggest of all in prison. "Madness has his beliefs," Mindy said. "He believes whites are better than blacks. But he knows I don't think like that, so we don't talk about it."

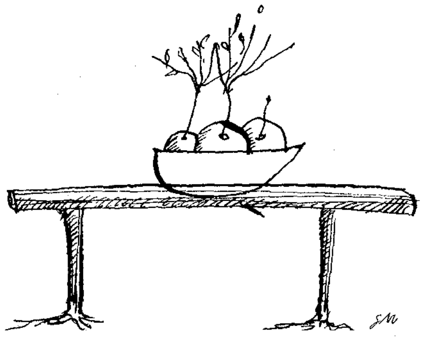
Mindy was by no means the only girl I had met in the Valley who had a prisoner boyfriend. I asked her what it was about guys in jail.

"It's sick, I guess," she said. "But I just find it really attractive. I guess it means they're capable of doing something really spontaneous, without regard for the consequences."

"Like shooting somebody."

"Yeah. They're adventurous. And they're tough, usually. There's nothing else to do in there but work out."

Mindy invited me to go with her and some friends to a rave in Hollywood a few days later. "Maybe Darius can come, too," she said. Darius was Darius Houston, one of the Sharps to whom Mindy had turned for protection. Darius is half black, half white, and was probably the N.L.R.s' least favorite skinhead. "I don't think Darius really likes me," Mindy said. "Because when I hung out with the boneheads"—this is a generic term for racist skinheads—"I used to call him a nigger. All the Sharps have good reason to hate me."



I asked Mindy if she might be hoping to become a Sharp herself.

She shook her head, and said, "Most people here say, 'Mindy Turner? Oh, you mean Nazi Mindy.' So I don't want to start being Sharp Mindy. I want to be just Mindy. If somebody asks me what I am now, I just tell them I'm Free Unity. That's not a gang. It's just what I believe."

"SHARP" stands for "skinheads against racial prejudice." It is not, as I first thought, a local Antelope Valley sect. Skinheads claim Sharp throughout the United States, in Europe, and even, reportedly, in Japan. There is no formal organization—just an antiracist ideology, a street-fighting tradition, and a few widely recognized logos, usually worn on jacket patches. Sharp's raison d'être is its evil twin, the better-known white-supremacist and neo-Nazi skinhead movement.

All the Antelope Valley Sharps, I found, were amateur social historians, determined to rescue the skinhead movement—or simply "skinhead," as they call it—from disrepute. In their version, which seemed broadly accurate, the original skinheads emerged in England in the mid-sixties out of other youth cultures—notably the "hard mods" and the Rude Boys, stylish Jamaicans who wore porkpie hats and listened to reggae and ska. Skinheads were clean-cut, working-class, nonracist ("two-tone"), and tough. They loathed hippies, for reasons of both class and hygiene, loved soccer and beer, fighting and ska, scooters and Fred Perry tennis shirts. For a detailed history of skinhead, the Antelope Valley Sharps all urged on me a book, published in 1991, in Scotland, called "Spirit of '69: A Skinhead Bible."

By the seventies, the movement had been hijacked, according to the Sharps, by the anti-immigrant National Front in England. And it was the second wave of British skinhead that crossed over to the United States, in the late seventies, as part of the great punk-rock cultural exchange; by then neo-Nazism and white supremacism were definitely in the mix, and a host of unholy alliances have since been formed between racist skinheads and old-line extremist organizations like the Aryan Nations, White Aryan Resistance, the Church of the Creator, and the Ku Klux Klan. After a decade of hate crimes and racist violence, white-power skinheads have become increasingly familiar figures in the American social landscape, particularly among teen-agers, who tend to know much more about them and their apocalyptic views than adults do.

"The boneheads are looking forward to a race war."

"They're all on some harsh drug."

"Somebody's got to stand up to these guys," Darius Houston said.

Six or seven Sharps were sitting around Jacob Kroeger's mother's house. Jacob, a sardonic eighteen-year-old, still had his hair, but he was about to shave it off and become a full-fledged Sharp—a "fresh cut." His mother was often away with a boyfriend, leaving the house—a modest ranch-style bungalow in a seedy older tract—to become, at least for a while, the Sharps' main hangout. They were a picturesque lot, in boots and braces, extra-short ("flooded") jeans, and Andy Capp-type "snap caps." But the mood that evening was rather grim and besieged. It seemed that a girl from the N.L.R.s had called Christina Fava, Darius's girlfriend, who is white, a "nigger lover" in a hallway at Antelope Valley High School. A black student named Todd Jordan had become involved on Christina's side, and the next day a half-dozen N.L.R.s had jumped Todd on a deserted athletic field, stabbing him five times with a screwdriver. Todd was now in the hospital. Christina, for her part, was transferring to a new school.

Somehow, I said, being a Sharp seemed to mean, more than anything else, a lot of fighting with white-power skinheads.

I was wrong, I was assured.

"It's the music, the fashions, the friendships, the whole life style."

"It's like a big fuckin' family."

"Everybody's got everybody else's back."

"It's all about working class."

This curious, almost un-American class consciousness among the Antelope Valley Sharps turned out, upon examination, to be a very American miscellany. The kids themselves came from a wide range of backgrounds—everything from two-parent middle-class families to drug-addled welfare mothers who had dumped them on the streets as adolescents. For some, "working class" meant simply having a job—any job—as opposed to being a "bum." For others, it was synonymous with "blue collar," and it distinguished them from richer kids, who might decide to be skinheads and buy all the gear but weren't really streetwise and so might just have to be relieved of their new twelve-hole Doc Martens.

"The feedback I'm getting tells me that if your people work with my people we can grow this thing."

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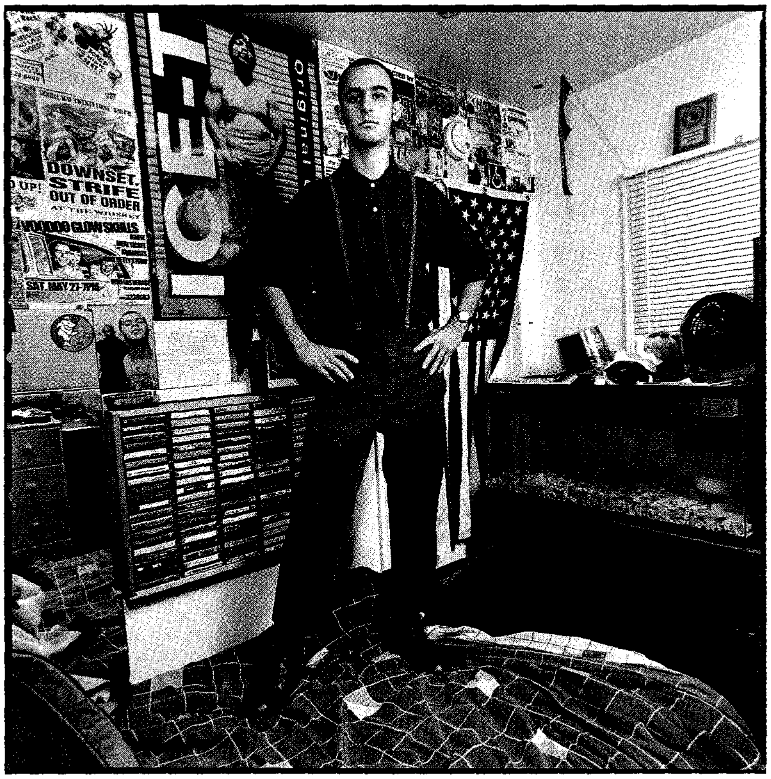
There was, in fact, much more to the Sharps than rumbling with the boneheads. For Darius, in particular, Sharp was a godsend. An orphan since his mother died, when he was thirteen, he had been a skateboarder and punk rocker before discovering skinhead. As a half-black kid in a largely white town, being reared by various white relatives, he had always been something of an outsider. Skinhead, as he understood it, was a complete, ready-made aesthetic and way of life. Darius identified, he told me, with its underground energy and its music—he was soon playing bass in a multiracial ska band called the Leisures. Because the idea of a black skinhead drove neo-Nazi skinheads wild, Darius had been fighting on a regular basis for years. He was a skilled fighter, but the backup that the other Sharps provided was still, for Darius, a lifesaver. Going to school had become too dangerous, so he was on independent study. After graduating, he said, he planned to join the Navy and become a medical technician. (Christina, for one, didn't think he was serious.) He was eighteen, beefy, soft-spoken, watchful, with skin the color of light mahogany. When we met, he was homeless and was sleeping on a couch in Jacob's mother's house.

In every gang, the crucial question about any member is "How down is he?" Among the Sharps, one of the most indisputably down was Johnny Suttle. Twenty years old, half Mexican and half Anglo, he was diminutive but super-aggressive. He worked graveyard shifts at a Taco Bell, took classes at the local community college, and, I found, had a great deal to say about skinhead. Skinhead was about loyalty—to your class, home town, soccer team, and nationality, according to Johnny. Thus, if a Japanese or a Chinese skinhead decided to beat up a foreigner, it was O.K. "Because they're just defending their country, and that's good," he said. "The thing is, America is not a white man's country, never mind what the boneheads say. It's a melting pot. And we're about defending that."

Johnny always seemed ready to weigh the moral dimensions of violence. I once heard him deliberate one of the timeless questions: Was it ethically permissible to drop bonehead chicks before taking on the boneheads? The answer, ultimately, was yes. While it was not right to hit females, bonehead chicks were simply too dangerous to leave standing while you fought their boyfriends. They would probably stick a knife in your back. Ergo, they had to be dropped at the outset. Q.E.D.



Johnny Suttle: "You always gotta show the boneheads you're crazier than they are. If you punk it and run, you're finished."

THE Nazi Low Riders, while dedicated skinheads, were not skinhead-history buffs. They were, however, keen on Nazi history. "We believe in Hitler's ways," Tim Malone, a leading member, told me. "But that don't mean we worship him. He was smart, but he was a homosexual. I think what he did with the Jews was right, mainly. They was coming into Germany, buying up the businesses, treating the Germans like slaves."

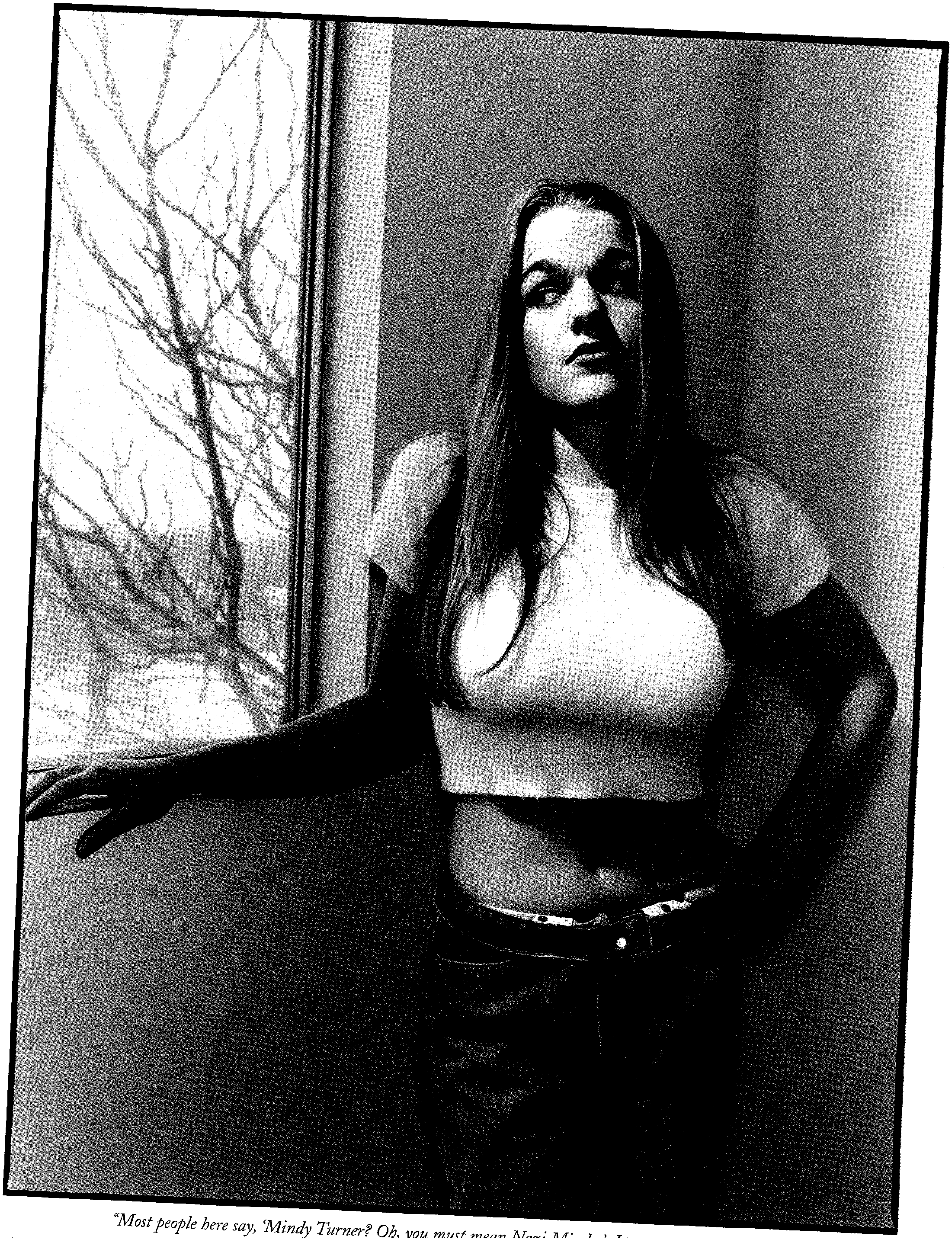
Chris Runge, another N.L.R., who explained to me that Hitler had actually been working with the Vatican, seemed to be the theorist of the Lancaster clique. He was nineteen, hairless, blue-eyed, pale-skinned, with a worried seriousness that was occasionally interrupted by a big, goofy smile. "I'm basically what you call a political Nazi," he said. "A lot of these Nazis out here are unorganized. They're mostly street skins, doing the dirty work. I want to start getting them organized. Democracy doesn't work. As you can see right now, it's falling apart. But Nazism is about a society with no upper class, no lower class. We'd have equality. We wouldn't have homelessness—because we keep the factories going and everybody has a place. With a Nazi government, we'd just take out all the unwanted and start over again—even whites, if they're doing the same thing as the niggers are." Chris gave me one of his big, blue-eyed smiles.

He grew serious again. "White supremacism just comes from seeing what's happening in society," he said. "We're going down." Though Chris's mother was, by all accounts, a serious tweaker, his grandfather, he said, was an executive with the Xerox Corporation—a point of reference, perhaps, for his bitter assessment. Chris himself had dropped out of school in the tenth grade and had been convicted for participating in the same drive-by shooting that sent Jaxon Stines, who was his best friend, to jail. And Chris had "found the Lord" in his cell, he said—an experience that may have softened some of his judgments. Of Mindy, for instance, Chris merely said, "She's confused. She's young." This was notably gentler than the pronouncements of other N.L.R.s on the subject. Chris even showed some self-awareness when he talked about his life. He told me that his mother's ex-husband used to beat her so badly when he was drunk that she would come lie in bed with Chris in the hope that it would make him stop. It didn't. "And that's a lot of the hate I got inside me now," Chris said quietly.

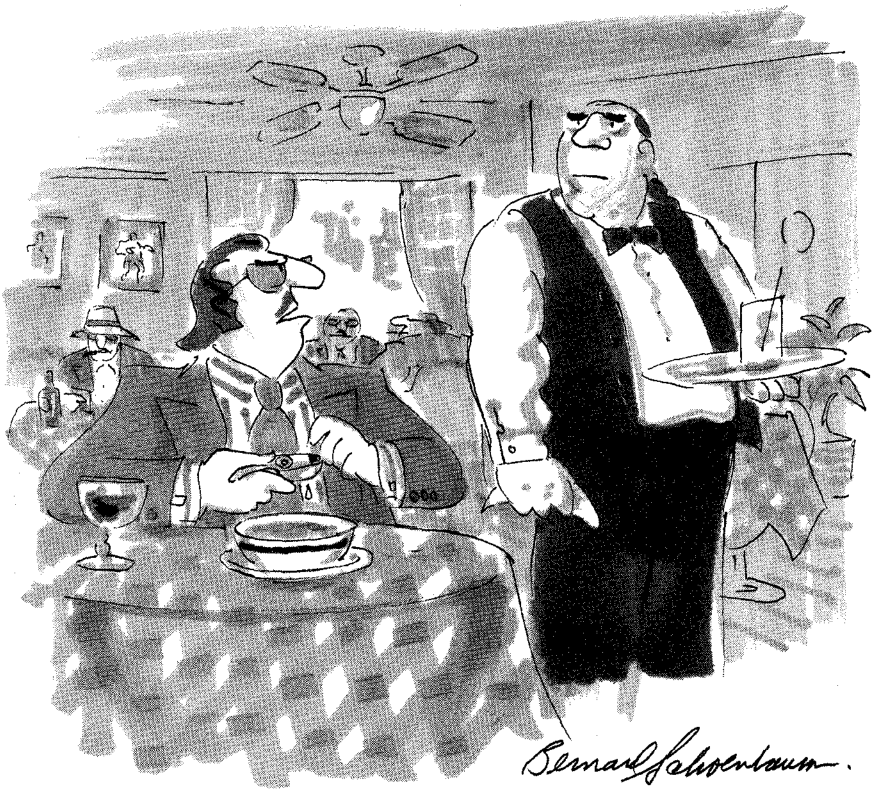
THOUGH I stopped by the Malones' house many times, I never saw Andrea there. She worked in a plastics factory in Pasadena, more than an hour's drive away, and, according to Tim, she left the house at dawn and got home only late in the evening. When I first met Tim, who was seventeen, he had just spent two months in jail: he had been locked up as an accessory in the Todd Jordan stabbing, but had been released for lack of evidence. He was wiry and well built, with close-cropped dark hair and, tattooed on the back of his neck, an Iron Cross. He described himself as "more of the Gestapo Storm Trooper type than a political Nazi—the type that's ready to go to war over things. There's gonna be a race war around the year 2000."

Tim's father had been a Hell's Angel, he said, so, he told me, his Nazism "was kind of inherited." His dad drank, did speed, and abused his mother—that was why his parents broke up. The family had lived in a predominantly black neighborhood in Montclair, east of Los Angeles, where Tim, at the age of ten, joined a local Crips set for self-protection. He was the middle brother of three, and his joining a black gang did not please his brothers. "Both my brothers was punk rockers, into speed metal, and they used to beat me up, trying to teach me a lesson," he said. "I thank them for it now. You gotta stick with your own race. Now ain't nothing I hate more than a wigger"—white nigger.

Tim and his brothers, Jeff and Steve, became skinheads after moving to the Antelope Valley four years ago and meeting the local neo-Nazis. They were soon a warm little nest of vipers. "We're all family," Tim said. "Even the little kids. Trouble's son, who's only, like, nine



"Most people here say, 'Mindy Turner? Oh, you must mean Nazi Mindy.' I want to be just Mindy."



"Oh, waiter, there's a bullet in my soup."

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months old, already knows how to *Sieg heil.*" Tim imitated an infant giving a Nazi salute, and laughed. (Trouble was the street name of Robert Jones, one of three N.L.R.s charged with firing into a parked car full of black people in Lancaster in 1995. He was recently sentenced to twelve years.)

Among the many kids who were usually around the Malones' house were some who could not have been more than ten. I wondered if their parents had any notion what kinds of things their children were seeing and hearing there. The attractions of the place as a hangout were not mysterious. It was like a child's idea of a pirates' den: scruffy and run by tattooed brigands. I even got the feeling sometimes that a rough, retrograde, neo-communal sort of social experiment was being conducted. A boy would be opening a can of beans to heat up on the stove. Someone would bellow, "Only bitches cook in this house!" The boy would drop the can, while onlookers guffawed. Angela Jackson, one of Mindy's tormentors, would tear herself away from the TV and finish opening the can, declaring herself "a skin bitch, a Featherwood." This giddy, Pleasure Island atmosphere darkened, I thought, after the feud with the Sharps produced its first dead youth.

DARIUS said he would gladly go to the rave with us, and Mindy seemed pleased. There was some question about whether Mindy herself would be able to go to the rave, however, because her mother had grounded her after finding her passed out, stark naked, on her bed with her head next to a bowl filled with vomit. Too much vodka with Jaxon, Mindy told me. It was now two days later, and still several days before the rave—which we ended up skipping in any case, after Jaxon accused Mindy of really wanting to go to Hollywood to "fuck niggers."

We were now waiting for Jaxon to come over, so that he and I could talk, and Mindy still seemed to be feeling hung over. "I hate light," she said. Her voice was flat and small. "My mom thinks I'm a vampire because I sit in my room with the music on and no lights. I won't even take acid if the sun's out."

Mindy loved LSD. She also liked cocaine. "Because it makes your mouth numb. I like to be numb. Speed lasts longer, but it makes you paranoid, so you end up doing stupid things."

The stupid things she'd done on speed seemed to be legion. "Like, once Heather and Angela and I were tweaking, and we saw two girls holding hands and we were really grossed out. We just said, 'We're going to show them that's not allowed.' We didn't have any weapons, but we really stomped them. One girl had to go to the hospital."

I remarked that I had recently read in a newspaper that "young men use methamphetamine for sexual stimulation." Mindy scoffed: "When Jaxon's tweaking, I could dance naked in front of him with a porno on the TV, and he still wouldn't be interested."

She went outside for a cigarette. Her mother didn't allow smoking in the house. I joined her in the back yard, which had a small swimming pool and a basketball hoop. From where we sat, we could see Mindy's thirteen-year-old brother, Matthew, in the kitchen. "Matthew's one of the reasons I quit the Nazis," Mindy said, her voice suddenly full of feeling. "He's going to play basketball and football in high school, and he's going to have to be able to get along with black people. And it won't work if he gets into something disgusting like I did."

I noticed, not for the first time, a clacking coming from inside Mindy's mouth. I asked about it. She stuck out her tongue. It was pierced with a heavy silver stud. "I've had this for a long time," she said.

She also had a ring through her navel, above which she had her name tattooed in longhand. Her mother absolutely couldn't understand that tattoo. "I mean, your own name? Why?" Debbie asked me. "Is it so that some guy can look down there while you're doing it in case he forgets your name?"

I once asked Mindy what she wanted to be when she grew up.

"Exotic dancer."

Debbie, I felt certain, was unaware of this ambition. She also didn't know that Mindy was not going to school. Her independent-study program required her presence only one hour a week, but I knew she had quietly abandoned it.

"Where is he?"

It looked as if Jaxon might not show, but at last he whipped into the driveway. Mindy jumped up, sat down, jumped up again. Jaxon came into the yard through the chain-link gate, a lean, wary-looking figure in a white T-shirt. He nodded at me, glanced at Mindy.

"We're going camping," he said.

"Can I go?" Mindy asked.

Jaxon didn't reply. He and I went inside and sat at the dining-room table. Mindy followed us in. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"Cottonwood."

"Can I go?"

Again, Jaxon didn't reply. He was a pale, good-looking kid with deep-set eyes and a large, unfortunate silver ring through his nose. ("I hate it. It makes him look like a bull," Mindy said.) His head was shaved except for a small, wispy patch on top. Mindy watched him miserably while we talked.

He had recently turned eighteen, he said. He had been kicked out of school in the ninth grade for fighting and truancy, and since then he had bounced around, living here and there, including a stint with his father, an unsuccessful rock musician who drove a school bus in Northern California. "I've hitchhiked all up and down California," Jaxon told me. "Every place is just as boring as this is." He had a studied jadedness, a cool anger in his eyes. He was plainly intelligent. He had got his high-school diploma by passing an equivalency exam at the age of fifteen. Since getting out of jail, he had been living with his mother and stepfather in Palmdale and working as a repair-line operator for the phone company, where his mother was a computer technician.

Mindy interrupted, pleading and petulant: "Can I go camping with you?"

Jaxon ignored her.

"Have you got sleeping bags?" I asked Jaxon.

"I've only got a mummy bag."

Mindy scurried down the hall in search of camping equipment.

Jaxon's parents divorced when he was three, he said. "My brother was the good little preppie. He never got caught for anything. I was the bad one. I shaved my head when I was, like, nine. They were sending me to shrinks from the fourth grade."

Surprisingly, considering that he had long been warring with the Sharps as part of the N.L.R. cohort, Jaxon said he esteemed Darius's beliefs. "Darius has the right idea," he told me. "We've talked. In fact, he used to be vegetarian straight-edge. That's no drugs, no drinking, no sex—nothing. Not too many people can follow that."

But Jaxon's sympathies were decidedly with the racist side of the skinhead schism. "I'm not, like, Mr. Nazi. And I know some black and Mexican people who are cool. But the majority of them are just welfare-mooching scumballs. I don't want to hear your sob story about how my great-great-grandfather owned your great-great-grandfather." Jaxon's sneer deepened until it severely distorted his face.

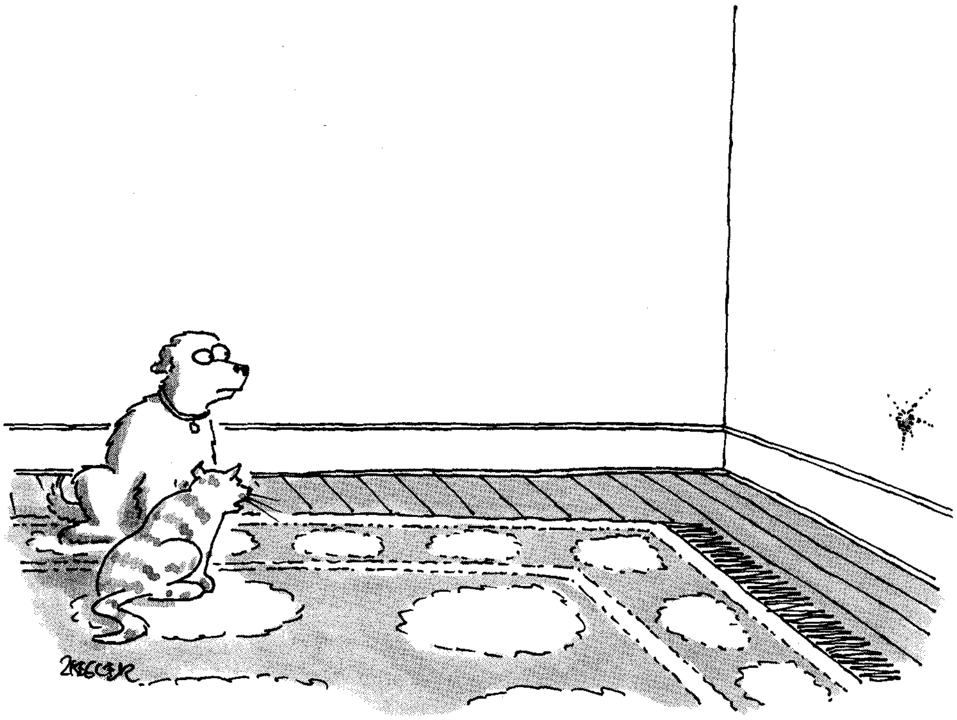
He went on, more calmly, "Whether I like it or not, I'm racist. My mom doesn't agree with me. She's not prejudiced. But I like to consider myself less ignorant than most racists. They're all preparing for race war, race war. But it's never going to happen." He shrugged. "I'm just proud of what I am. But being proud of being white doesn't mean I'm proud of every piece of white trash out there snorting speed."

Mindy reappeared, lugging an armful of gear for the camping trip, including an old, square-bottomed sleeping bag, which she displayed proudly. "Where is Cottonwood?" she asked.

JAXON was right: his mother didn't agree with him. A political liberal with a degree in anthropology, she lived with her second husband and her two sons in a big, cathedral-ceilinged house in a gated community. "I don't know why Jaxon holds those racial views," she told me. "I keep hoping it's just a teen-age rebellion, and he'll grow out of it—that it's not how he *is*." Other parents I visited in the Antelope Valley seemed equally mystified by their kids' passionate "beliefs."

Schools failed to provide most parents and children with any common cultural ground. Sheldon Epstein, a high-school principal in Lancaster, who had a cheerleader daughter, told me, "My wife and I are big-time supporters of our daughter's school. But most of the kids are just not bonded with their schools, so for them that school-spirit piece is missing. It's the parents who have school spirit now, not the kids."

The fact was, however, that among the tens of thousands of parents who worked over the mountains, relatively few had the time or energy to involve themselves in their children's schools (or any other community activity). And then there were all those too consumed by their own troubles even to rear their children. I found, that is, a startling number of kids in the Valley being reared not by their parents but by their grandparents. Various explanations were offered for this phenomenon, the commonest being methamphetamine addiction among parents, and particularly mothers. The situation was starkly reminiscent of the better-known syndrome that has left so many African-American grandmothers rearing



"Projectile hairballing."

the children of their crack-addled daughters in the nation's inner cities. In the Antelope Valley, it was white families falling into poverty who were being hit hardest by speed.

Between 1970 and 1995, the poverty rate for children and adolescents in California more than doubled—it is now twenty-eight per cent. And just as crime rates tend to track closely with poverty rates, vast amounts of the state's public spending have been diverted during this period to law enforcement and the penal system. The California prison budget in 1975 was two hundred million dollars. By the year 2000, it will approach five billion dollars. The money for all these jails and prisons has come more or less directly out of the state's higher-education budget. When I graduated from high school, in 1970, California had what was often described as the finest public-university system in the world. That was then. Between 1991 and 1994, the state's higher-education system lost two thousand professors and two hundred thousand students to budget cuts. Meanwhile, University of California tuition in 1995 was, in constant dollars, nearly five times what it was thirty years before. The situation in the schools is no better. When I was in junior high, the state's public schools enjoyed the seventh-highest per-pupil spending in the country; by 1995, California's per-pupil spending ranked forty-seventh nationally.

Nancy Kelso, a middle-aged lawyer in Palmdale who has many juvenile clients, rejects the view, which she says is common among her peers and colleagues, that they grew up in a Golden Age, when children obeyed their parents and ordinary people felt safe and God was in his Heaven. "I remember the Red Scare," she told me. "I remember suffocating pressure to conform. I remember a lot of bad things." She also remembers, however, a radically different opportunity structure. "When I graduated from high school, in 1962, it was like a deal—a contract—between the adults and me," she said. "All I had to do was get a B average and halfway behave myself and I was guaranteed a free education at a top public university, like Berkeley. My four siblings and I all took advantage of it. Our dad was a five-dollar-an-hour nonunion machinist in Los Angeles. We all became productive, responsible citizens. I tell you, I would have a lot more anxiety about what was going to become of me if I were growing up now."

THE THREE TREES

Late day. A wash of claret at the window.
And the room swells with the odor of quince,
tin-sharp and dank, as the acid creeps down
through the etch marks. He dips the foreground languidly,
Rembrandt, so thickets will darken, the horse
and lovers resting there, the bamboo latitude
of fishing pole, the shadowed river.

Then inks it all—mixed sky, three dappled trees—
and presses the intricate net of it
to the white-bleached etching sheet below: one skein
of storm aligning the nothingness, one hay cart
rich with villagers. At the window now

a fading to ochre. And beyond,
through the streets and valley at the base
of a hillock thick with three trees, a hunter
is ringing a treble bell, its quick bite
driving the field birds to the sheltering grasses.
Around him, dark in their earth-colored clothes, others
are throwing a slack-weave net

In 1996, Palmdale High School, out of a graduating class of about four hundred, sent exactly six students into the University of California system. Less than ten per cent of the class went on to any four-year college at all.

Listening to Nancy Kelso, I kept thinking of Chris Runge grumbling about "the unwanted." He and his friends look forward to a "Nazi government" whisking this surplus population from sight. Of course, he and his friends undoubtedly feel that they themselves are the real "unwanted." And they are not wrong. But one of the ironies of their predicament is that the withdrawal of resources from education and other social services is fundamentally racist—that is, it is primarily a withdrawal by older whites from the support of those aspects of public welfare, including public education, which seem to benefit a large number of nonwhites. And yet the collapse of educational opportunity caused by this withdrawal is suffered by all nonaffluent children and families. "Affirmative action" is merely the name that many whites give to their sense of disfranchisement.

Issues of race and opportunity are particularly loaded in the Antelope Valley. Esther Gillies, the director of a center for abused children in Lancaster, put it bluntly: "Black families who move to the Valley are often moving up. White families who move to the Valley couldn't make it down below." While I heard many whites complain about lower-class blacks and Latinos settling in the Valley, I often sensed that they were really more concerned about middle-class minority families. Todd Jordan's family lived in a grander house than any of the white-power kids who stabbed him did. I talked with black parents who pronounced themselves delighted with their new, racially integrated neighborhoods (the Valley has developed so fast that the insidious patterns of residential segregation have not taken root), but even they expressed wariness about staying on once their children reach high-school age. In the words of one well-educated black mother of three, "That's when the white-supremacist thing seems to kick in."

I DID meet white kids in the Antelope Valley who were college-bound. Natalie Blacker, for instance, was the editor of the school newspaper at Quartz Hill High. Natalie was one of Mindy's idols—"I'm totally in love with her" was how Mindy put it—and was friendly with the Sharps. A feminist, Natalie had started a consciousness-raising group for

out over the meadow and scuttering birds.
And up from their various hands quick fires bloom,
rush through the beard grass, the birds bursting up
to the capturing net, some dying of fright,
some of flames, some snuffed by the hunters

like candles. A breeze begins, slips through the tree limbs.
Slung over each hunter are threadings of birds,
strung through the underbeak. Pleatworks of plentitude,
down the back, the curve of the shoulder.
They offer their warmth in slender lines,
as sunlight might, through the mismatched shutters
of a great room, the long gaps casting

their crosshatch. As if time itself might spin them all
down some vast, irreversible pathway—
hay cart, hunter, small bowl with its blossoms of quince—
and the simple patterns resting there
barred everything back from the spinning.

—Linda Bierds

girls at her school. (*Her* idol was Naomi Wolf.) She nagged her friends not to let their boyfriends treat them badly—Jaxon's cavalier treatment of Mindy was, she told me, a great example of what girls should not put up with—but she cheerfully acknowledged the depth and staying power of the sexism and racism she opposed. She was shocked, she told me, when Mindy fell in with the boneheads, and delighted when Mindy renounced them. "But you really have to be strong to do that, to stay neutral here," she added. "This is a place where everybody feels the need to be in a clique."

An ambitious effort to get teen-agers to channel this need to belong into their school lives was under way at Lancaster High, which opened in the fall of 1995. Students wore uniforms; teachers wore red, white, and blue. The curriculum was demanding and old-fashioned—"fifties style," according to Beverley Louw, the school's dynamic first principal. "Our hope is that we can create the culture, and that way not lose our students to the kinds of fragmented subcultures—the heshers, the skinheads, and so on—that you find kids joining elsewhere."

But after six months at the helm of Lancaster High Ms. Louw already sounded pessimistic. She had too many students whom she couldn't help, she said—kids who arrived at school with too many deficits. Besides that, the Sharps and the neo-Nazis were already fighting at her school.

Antelope Valley officials tend to say that white-supremacist skinheads are less of a problem than they seem. The police say the boneheads are dwarfed in number by the black and Latino gangs who have moved up from Los Angeles. The most obvious gang tension in the Valley, though, was not between the Bloods and the Crips but between the Sharps and the neo-Nazis. If you went to Brunswick Sands Bowl, a bowling alley on the Sierra Highway, in Lancaster, the jacket that caught your eye, worn by a spike-haired teen-age punk, would be the one with a huge patch on the back snarling "NAZI PUNKS FUCK OFF." Or if you went to the only real teen hangout in Lancaster, a coffeehouse called Hang 'n Java, which had a pool table, music, and an Internet connection, you could find a tense conference taking place at the counter between the owner and a group of Sharps. When I went, I found her throwing them out. She supported them, she maintained, but she could not risk their business, because if the boneheads saw them in there they'd come back at night and shoot out her windows. "And I can't pay the insurance," she said tightly.

THE police may not have wanted to acknowledge the dimensions of the problem, but for Darius Houston white-supremacist violence seemed inescapable. I once asked him what it felt like to be the target of so much bonehead ire.

Darius looked embarrassed. "Even white powers are people, so you have to respect them," he said. Then he added, "Unless they don't respect me. Which they don't." He shrugged. "Most skinheads fight. It comes with the book. It comes to you."

Once, at a rock concert I attended with the Sharps, I saw just how much of it tended to come to Darius. It was an oi show in San Bernardino. Oi music is a hard form of punk rock, and it appeals to the whole range of skinheads. The headliners at the San Bernardino show were a cult band from Britain called The Business. The Antelope Valley Sharps were deeply thrilled to be seeing them, and when we got to the concert, which was held in an old wrestling arena near the San Bernardino railroad tracks, there were several hundred skinheads inside, most of them white but many of them Latino or Asian. Cliques milled around, exchanging elaborate tribal greetings with other cliques and having their pictures taken together. All was mellow, all was unity, I was assured. No boneheads had come. A couple of punk bands played, and there was some moderate thrashing in the pit, so I retreated to one of the wooden bleachers that rose on three sides of the arena. And that's where I was, looking down on the crowd, when the Orange County Skins arrived. They were in uniform and in formation. Their uniform consisted of black combat boots, white trousers, and the white tank tops known as "wife beaters." Their formation was a sort of flying wedge, which knocked people aside with swift, efficient violence as they swept toward the middle of the pit. There were no more than thirty of them, but their paramilitary coördination overwhelmed each bit of startled resistance. They easily seized the center of the arena, turned to the stunned crowd, and raised their arms in Nazi salutes, bellowing, “White power! White power!”

There was a lengthy pause, during which everyone seemed to consider the boots of the invaders. Whoever approached them first was certain to get his teeth kicked in. Then the crowd rushed the boneheads, and a bloody melee began. It seemed to be all boots and fists. Security at the door had been very tight—a guard had even taken away my pens, tartly demonstrating how someone could jab out my eyes with one of them—so the possibilities for injury presumably had some limits. I caught glimpses of Sharps I knew, flailing away—particularly Darius, who is tall and, as a black skin, seemed to be the focus of a great deal of Nazi fury. But Darius stayed on his feet, blessedly, and seemed to have plenty of help as he spun and kicked and punched. The Nazis were badly outnumbered but preternaturally fierce.

Then I saw Darius running toward the rear bleachers, where I was perched. He was holding one eye—pawing at it frantically—and zigzagging blindly through the crowd. I had a horrible premonition that he had been stabbed in the eye. I ran down the bleachers to meet him, and tripped and twisted my ankle. A security guard had to help us both stagger out through a back door into the rain. Darius, still pawing at his eye, threw himself face first into a puddle. He splashed water into his eye. “Somebody Maced me,” he shouted. I felt a rush of relief. Darius rose up, blinking, gasping. “It's O.K.,” he said. “It's O.K. I can see.” The door behind us flew open, and another casualty came reeling out. Darius sprang to the door, caught it, and, without another word, was gone—back into the roaring fray.

“WHAT the Orange County Skins did at that oi show?” Mindy said. Her tone was petulant, scornful. We were sitting in her room. “These boneheads out here could never think of that. They're just into speed. The original Nazis did no drugs, didn't smoke pot, drink beer—anything. They just trained for war, twenty-four seven. These guys out here have no right to call themselves Nazis. That's why I don't like them.”

This, I thought, was new. Mindy had previously disliked the N.L.R.s for a lot of reasons, but not because they failed to emulate Hitler's men properly. And, for the record, many of Hitler's élite troops were in fact tweakers. But Mindy was upset. It seemed she had been jilted by Jaxon for a younger girl, named Casey.

“O.K., I'm not fifteen and six feet tall with two pierced nipples!” she wailed. Casey was apparently all these things. “O.K., I'm immature and selfish! I was spoiled when I was young. But he is so selfish, so conceited, so immature, so arrogant!”

I didn't argue.

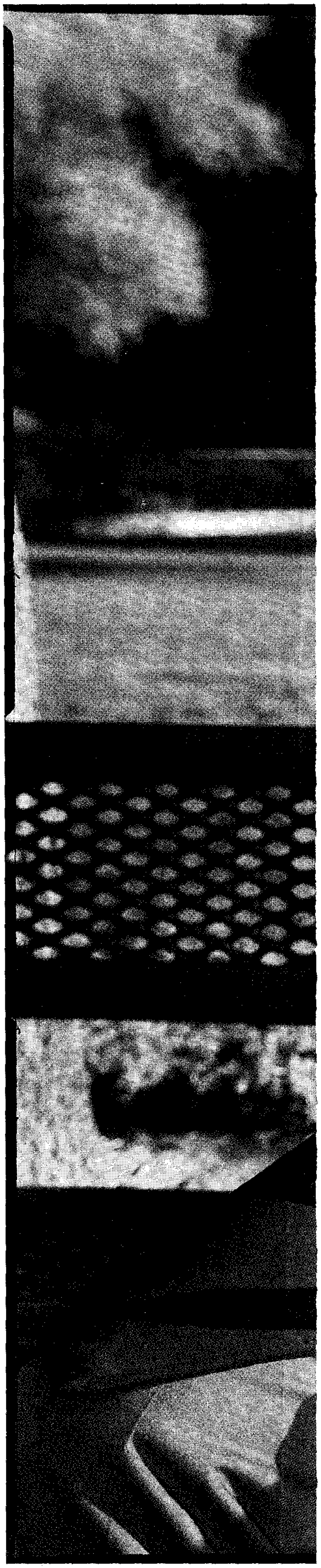
“Plus, he won't give me my baby blanket back. My dad gave it to me. It's my security blanket. I'm all ‘Give me my blanket.’ He's all ‘Give me my CD.’ ”

“I would have gone to jail for Jaxon,” she went on bitterly. “For that drive-by. They didn't have anything on me. I had an alibi. But I would have gone.”

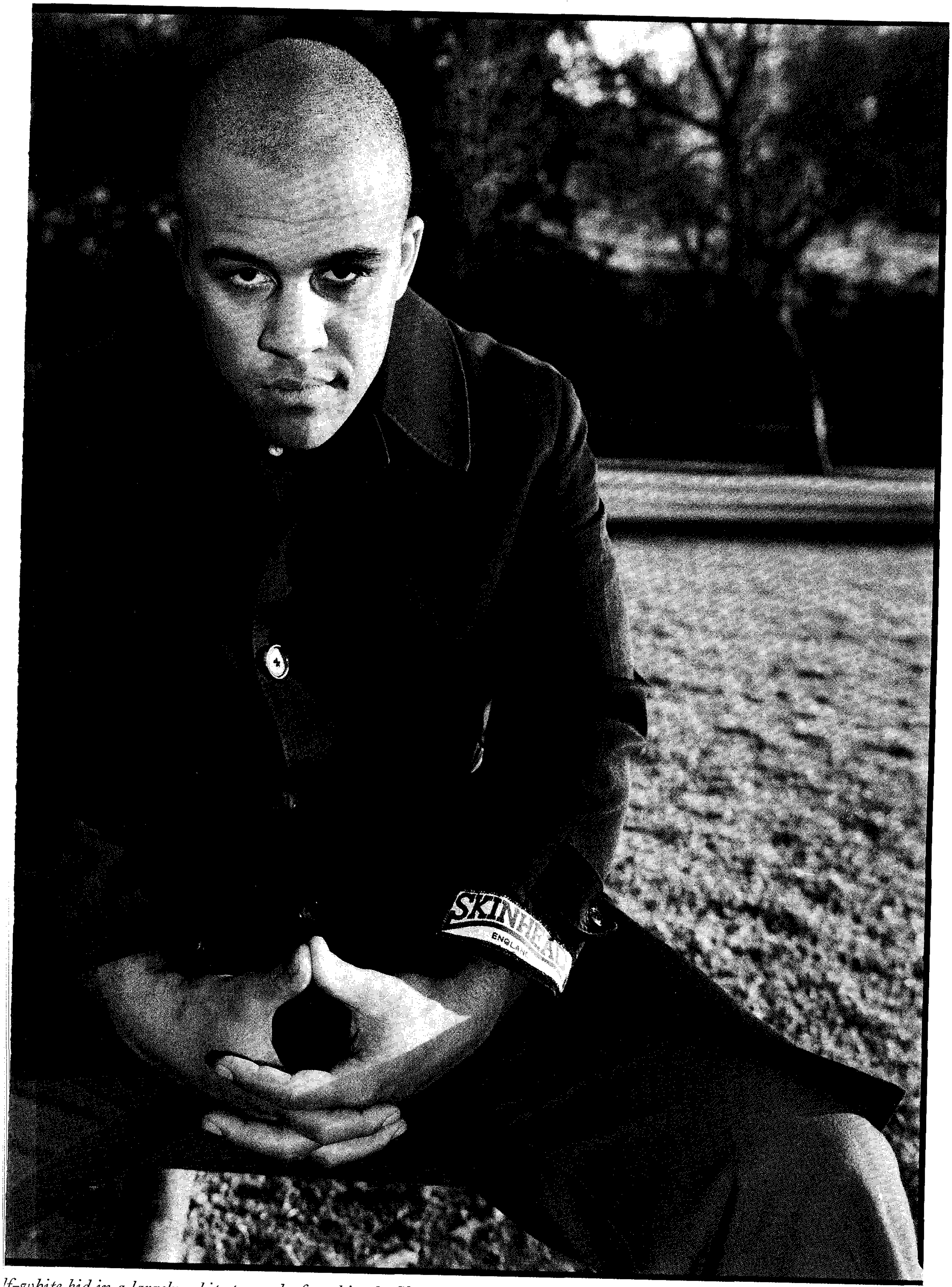
Debbie was just coming in from work. “You tell him about how you're going back to school or I'm going to send you to live with Grandma?” Debbie asked. She had discovered that Mindy was skipping her independent-study appointments and had grounded her. Mindy carried off the groceries that Debbie had brought home. “My mother still lives in Canyon Country,” Debbie told me. Canyon Country, a set of suburbs slightly closer to L.A., was where the Turners lived before they moved to the Antelope Valley. “It's better for kids, I think. Mindy would probably never have got into all this bad stuff there.”

“The Antelope Valley sucks!” Mindy called from the kitchen. Debbie and Mindy had been having problems over Debbie's boyfriend, Tom, who, over Mindy's objections, had briefly moved into the Turner household.

Mindy took me to meet her grandparents one evening, in their spotless, triple-wide trailer in Canyon Country. While Mindy darted in and out of the living room, playing on her grandfather's computer—in this house she seemed suddenly about ten years younger, as if she had magically regressed to a calmer, more constrained, less sexualized, less bored self—I talked to



Darius Houston: A half-bla


SKINHEA
ENGLAN

f-white kid in a largely white town, he found in the Sharps a complete, ready-made aesthetic and way of life.

Pearl, her grandmother, who was originally from Nebraska. She was decorous and candid as she described her concerns about Mindy's future. Pearl, who used to be a bookkeeper, now does fancy cake decorating and has been married to Jerry, her third husband, for twenty-one years. When he came in, he kissed Mindy and told her the computer she was playing on was going to be hers. He was getting a new one, and all kids needed a computer at home nowadays.

Looking after her as she skipped back to her new toy, he said, "Mindy is probably the biggest frustration I have in my life now. I feel bad that I haven't been more of an influence on her." He told me, in strong language, his feelings about Jaxon and his racist beliefs; I could see how he would have made a very strict guardian. I tried to picture Mindy living with her grandparents, but could picture only a great clash and meltdown.

"The problem is, society requires both parents to work," Pearl said. "Single parents also have to work. So kids are left to raise themselves. That's why they have no respect, no discipline. There's no one to teach them how to care, how to love, how to live. So they form these groups, and, right or wrong, those are their families."

Various Sharps and N.L.R.s had told me the same thing, of course. But it was sadder to hear it from a consummate grandmother in her big, clean, cozy mobile home.

A WILLOWY ice-blond sixteen-year-old girl named Ronda Hardin, who was loosely associated with the Nazi Low Riders, once unnerved me by talking, in a breathy, high, almost reverential voice, about "my hatred." She smiled faintly when she said it, and yet the frame around everything she said, I thought, was a sense of loss—loss of a marginal color-caste privilege that, in her mind, was supposed to keep black people beneath her socially and, in that way, somehow prevent the worst from happening to her. Because she lacked that reassurance, her beloved hatred seemed to be a main prop of her self-respect.

On the night of March 9, 1996, Ronda was in a little brown tract house on East Avenue J-4 in Lancaster. I've heard at least two dozen versions of what happened that night, but a few facts are undisputed. The Sharps were having a party. There were roughly fifty kids there, most of them white, not all of them antiracists. A keg of beer was flowing. Darius, who was drunk, got into a dispute in the kitchen with Ronda, who was wearing a bomber jacket with a Confederate-flag patch on one sleeve. The dispute may have been over the patch. Darius may have choked Ronda. In any case, Ronda fled. After another boy tried to defend her and got beaten up by the Sharps, Ronda, who had gone to the Malones' house and told the N.L.R.s what happened, went back to the party with Tim and Jeff Malone.

The boys went inside. Ronda remained in the car. A confrontation took place almost immediately, not far from the front door. Jeff Malone, a quiet nineteen-year-old whose gang name was Demon, waved a knife at a girl who approached him. She later said she had been trying to warn him to leave. Darius, standing in a knot of his friends, threw a cup of beer at Tim Malone. One of the Malones challenged Darius. The N.L.R.s were standing in close formation, their backs against a living-room wall. Darius ran toward them, a knife in his right hand. With his first thrust, he stabbed Jeff Malone through the heart. Jeff fell. His friends dragged him out the door.

Ronda ran to a neighbor's to phone the police. Jeff's friends drove him to the hospital. On the way, they tried to stop the bleeding. Tim was slapping his brother hard in the face, shouting, "Breathe! Breathe!" To the driver, he yelled, "Run this light! Go! Go!" It was only a few minutes' drive to Antelope Valley Hospital. By the time they got there, Jeff's body was cold. They carried him inside. He was pronounced dead an hour later.

"HOMEBOY deserved it," Johnny Suttle, the Sharps' ethicist, said. "He shouldn't have come to that party. He wasn't invited."

Johnny himself wasn't at the party. He was at Taco Bell, working. But he heard about the stabbing soon after it happened, and he helped direct the Sharps' flurry of subsequent moves. A group of Sharps had bundled Darius away. They drove first to a cemetery behind Antelope Valley High, and there they all spat on the bloody knife and buried it under a bush. Next, they went to a park and cleaned up Darius, whose clothes and arms were covered with blood. Then, unaware that Jeff was dead, they dispersed for the night.

"I don't have lunch. I have people who do that for me."

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But the news was soon flying around town. Jacob Kroeger, the fresh-cut Sharp, was lying in bed a couple of hours later when he got a phone call. He jumped up and woke his mother, brother, and sister. Within minutes, they had packed their bags and moved to his grandmother's house. Some of Darius's relatives were also on the move before daybreak. N.L.R. death threats were already in the air.

Johnny called the police in the morning, and he liked what he heard. The police had interviewed a number of witnesses, and to them the killing sounded like self-defense. Johnny, who knew where Darius was hiding, agreed to bring him in for questioning. He did so, and Darius was questioned but not arrested. Darius then went deeper into hiding, with some relatives in Orange County.

The killing became a crossroads of sorts for the Sharps. Johnny took a hard line. "We gotta get more aggressive now," he told me. "You always gotta show the boneheads you're crazier than they are. That's the only way they won't fuck with you. If you punk it and run, you're finished."

Jacob, on the other hand, decided to let his hair grow out—"to hang up my boots and braces," as he put it. When I asked him why, he looked nonplussed. "Why? Death, that's why," he said. "This is just not a win-win situation." His friends understood, he said. He would still back them up. He just wouldn't claim skinhead. Like many Sharps (and ex-Sharps), Jacob was angry at Darius. "Why did he do it? He had no right to play God, to take another man's life. And now we all have to lie low. We can't go out and get drunk, like we used to. We just have to stay in our houses and watch for boneheads."

Jacob's house was actually empty. As the Sharps' old hangout, it was now too dangerous to live in. In fact, less than a week after the killing Jacob's entire family moved to Utah, where his mother's boyfriend had relatives.

The Sharps as a group seemed intent on putting Jeff Malone's death behind them as fast as possible. They joked about "that killer party," and soon began referring glibly to "the time Darius shanked that fool."

Natalie Blacker, the college-bound feminist whom Mindy admired, had been at the fateful party, talking to Darius, just before the trouble started. "It's so terrible," she told me. "Darius has so much potential." She had mixed feelings about her friend Christina's reaction to the tragedy. Christina, who, as Darius's girlfriend, was now in real peril, had chosen not to lie low. She still went to school, still worked in a shop on Lancaster's main drag. She talked to Darius on the phone regularly, and drove down to see him every chance she got. "I mean, it's great that she's so loyal," Natalie said. "But girls around here can be too loyal. Sometimes it's like Christina doesn't realize that he killed someone."

MINDY realized it, and she was devastated. We were sitting in the Hang 'n Java coffeehouse, in Lancaster, a week after the killing, and she could not seem to take her eyes off the floor. "I keep thinking about this one time with Jeff," she said. Her voice was low and dull. "It wasn't that long ago. We were at a party, and he was on a trampoline, just jumping up and down, and he was so happy. We went back to my house, and he was hungry, and all I could find was a can of pork and beans. He wouldn't even let me heat it up for him. He just ate it cold. I can't get that out of my mind."

The Malones were about to bury Jeff, but Mindy was not invited to the funeral. "They should think about what Jeff would want," she said. "Jeff would want me there. But I'm not a Nazi, so I'm not welcome." She sighed. "I think I'll go buy this Danzig CD Jeff liked and listen to it while they're having the funeral. One of his favorite songs is on there. He sang it to me one time when we were lying on his bed. I had such a crush on him. He always had a crush on me, too. I remember one night lying on the roof of his house, just rubbing Jeff's head until we both passed out."

Tears were trickling down Mindy's cheeks. We sat and sipped coffee in silence for a couple of minutes.

"The N.L.R.s will never forgive me

for saying Darius was fine," Mindy said suddenly. "It was true, though—he really was good-looking. But I've lost all respect for him now. If I saw him, I wouldn't even talk to him. I would just give him a dirty look."

After a few minutes' reflection, she went on, "I don't want to go back to being a bonehead. I don't want to have a label on me. But Tim says I already have one. He says I'm a 'gang-hopper.' "

It was news to me that Mindy was talking to Tim Malone. As it happened, Tim had just told me that the N.L.R.s were on strict orders to do nothing. The police were watching them, he said, expecting them to retaliate against the Sharps. This ceasefire might mean that Mindy herself was safe, at least temporarily, I thought—a hopeful possibility that I mentioned to her. She thought about it but seemed uncomforted.

Two burly young men had come into the coffeehouse and were standing behind Mindy. Both wore baseball caps, and both had goatees. I watched them idly, wondering if they were boneheads. Then, as they began to walk past us, one of them turned and gave me a startling look right in the face. It was a practiced, frightening, prison-yard challenge. I had never seen the guy before, but I now had no doubt that he was a neo-Nazi. He kept walking. The skin on the back of my neck was crawling. I was so distracted that I suggested we leave, and we did. Mindy, who hadn't noticed a thing, said she wanted to go home and finish a poem she had been working on for Mrs. Malone.

WHEN I asked Tim Malone how his mother was taking Jeff's death, he said, "Like she should. Hard and dry."

That wasn't true, I found, when I talked to her. Mrs. Malone was tearful and despondent, and was wishing aloud that she had never moved her family to the Antelope Valley. "I wanted to get Tim away from the gangs in Montclair," she said. "But there are bad influences here, too, and my boys have gotten under their wing, and I'm hardly ever home to protect them." She knew almost no one in the Valley, she said, and added, "But I've met more people in the last few days—people just calling up to offer condolences—than I'd met in the three years before this happened."

Even Heather Michaels, one of the fiercest N.L.R.s, wasn't "hard and dry" when we spoke. "They didn't want no trouble," she said, meaning, improbably, the N.L.R.s who had rushed to the party that night. "If they wanted trouble, they would've taken guns. They thought there was just five or ten Sharps there. Then they get there, turns out it's like fifty or a hundred Sharps." Heather's eyes welled at the thought. "If one of us had killed this nigger, or even stabbed him, we'd all be locked up."

Tim Malone said the same thing, calling the police treatment of Darius "reverse discrimination." He and Chris Runge and I were standing in the Malones' front yard. It was a sunny afternoon. Both of them were bare-chested and wore boots and jeans.

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and tenfold," Chris intoned. "Darius will get a lot worse than what Jeff got."

"That's right, brother," Tim said. To me, he said, "You know, we didn't expect Darius to be there. Because he usually runs if he thinks we might be coming."

I asked what had happened.

"We saw him in there, standing with his friends, and when he saw us he started bouncing up and down." Tim demonstrated. I had seen Darius do that fighter's bounce, during the melee at the oi show in San Bernardino. "Then somebody offered me a beer, and when I went to take it Darius threw a cup of beer at me. I caught it, threw it down, and called him on." Tim demonstrated his quick reactions, his forceful challenge. " 'Come on, nigger, let's go! Right now!' Then I spit in his face."

Nobody else had remembered the scene this way.

"Then four guys rushed me, and Darius came in behind them, low, and reached around me and stuck Jeff. I saw it go in. It was a pocketknife, with a black handle. Jeff didn't even know he'd been stuck. Then he looked down at his shirt and saw it. He went, 'Fuck you, nigger!' " Tim imitated Jeff crouching, both middle fingers raised before him like guns. Again, nobody else remembered anything like this. "We dragged him to the car, and we beat the shit out of him on the way to the hospital. 'Wake the fuck up!' But he died before we got there."

We stood and watched the traffic pass. I asked if Jeff had said anything in the car. "No," Tim said. "But I know what he would have said: 'Get that nigger!' "

Tim and Chris looked at each other, their shaved heads slowly nodding.

I FOUND Darius somewhere in the suburban wilderness of Orange County. We met at a Taco Bell. Christina and a Palmdale skinhead named Juan were also there. Juan had been in the group that spirited Darius away from the party after the killing. Darius looked much the same—a little warier, less abashed, slightly exhilarated. We had talked on the phone a few days before, and I had asked how he felt. "I'm going to be more mellow," he had said. "I was sick the first couple of days. I haven't felt that feeling since my parents died. Some people probably get off on it, and some people don't like it. I don't like it. It's weird. You've taken somebody's life, and they're never coming back on this earth. At the same time, you feel happy, because he was, like, your enemy."

I ran Tim Malone's version of the killing past Darius and Juan. When I got to the part about Jeff's noticing he had been stabbed, throwing up his middle fingers in defiance, and bellowing "Fuck you, nigger!" Juan and Darius gaped.

"He did what?" Juan said.

I told them again.

Juan and Darius looked at each other. Darius laughed. Juan shrugged. "O.K.," Juan said. "They want to go out in a blaze of glory. That's cool. They can have their story."

In Darius's version, the boneheads had arrived with two knives. Darius had kicked one of them loose and then picked it up. That was the knife he had used to stab Jeff. None of the other witnesses I interviewed had seen this kick, or anything like it. Darius, I thought, didn't look abashed enough as he told this story.

Sitting in that Taco Bell and talking to the boys, I watched Christina from the corner of my eye. She fidgeted, checked her watch, said nothing. I noticed her studying Darius, her expression both cool and oddly contented. This fugitive skinhead was her main project now, even the center of her life. Other kids in the Antelope Valley were starting to talk about her with awe: her black boyfriend killed a bonehead; he was in hiding; she stuck by him, defying her parents. It was a romantic role, far larger than ordinary Valley teen-age life.

After Christina and Juan set off on

the long drive back to the Valley, Darius took me to meet some new friends he had made. "It's a good thing I cliqued up with some other heads," he said. "Because Huntington Beach is just a few miles from here, and that's where the O.C. Skins are from. I need people to watch my back."

Darius's friends lived in a vast low-rise apartment complex. We passed through an empty white brick foyer and were buzzed into a courtyard that seemed to ramble on for blocks—through plots of grass and stands of tattered bamboo, past a lighted swimming pool, around a thousand plastic tricycles and abandoned toys. All the ground-floor apartments had sliding glass doors without curtains. Behind them, virtually in public, people watched TV, ate sushi, and scratched their bellies, oblivious of path traffic like us. There were Asians, Latinos, blacks, whites, bikers, yuppies, buppies, old Samoans, young Cambodians. It was a Free Unity world, I thought. It felt like a vision of the next American century: ramshackle, multiracial, cut-rate. White supremacists, it struck me, fear the future for a reason: it's going to be strange and very complicated.

Darius's friends weren't there, but some other guys were, and they let us in. They looked like skaters. Two were white. One was Asian. They were smoking a bong, listening to music. Darius and I sat on a couch to one side and talked. He was staying with one of his three half brothers, not far away, he said. He was thinking about moving to Germany. First, though, he was going to enroll in the local community college to learn German. Then he thought he might join the Navy. In the meantime, he thought Christina should move down here. It was too dangerous for her in the Antelope Valley now.

THE first time I talked to the Lancaster prosecutor in charge of investigating Jeff Malone's death, he shared with me his feelings about gang killings in general. "I say lock 'em all up in a room and prosecute the survivor," he said. I took this to mean that Darius did not have to fear prosecution.

Later, when a decision was officially made not to prosecute, the same assistant district attorney explained his reasoning to me. The victim and his friends had gone to a house where a hostile or opposing gang was having a party. The victim had a knife. He attacked Mr. Houston. Mr. Houston's claim that the knife he used belonged to the victim or to the victim's friends was not credible. But it was not illegal for him to possess that knife inside that house. There were conflicting eyewitness versions of the attack. It was certainly not a particularly vicious attack. The fact that a single knife thrust had killed the victim was simply bad luck. The crucial question for the prosecution was whether a jury could be persuaded that the killing had not been self-defense. That seemed unlikely. The victim was a Nazi skinhead, who would not be viewed sympathetically. Mr. Houston was on his own turf, minding his own business. "I'm not saying Mr. Houston is a great guy," the prosecutor concluded. "He's not. He's a jerk. You need to call me in about six months to see if he is still alive. I do not believe he will be."

To the Malone family's bitter contention that it was really because Jeff was a skinhead from a poor family that no one would be prosecuted for his death, I could think of no rejoinder. It was true.

SO families flee the city for far-flung suburbs, but the evils they hope to escape—drugs, gangs, violent crime—flourish wherever they land. Why? I kept recalling Mindy's grandmother's remark about how kids were being left to raise themselves. If most parents must work outside the home, the obvious institution to take up the caretaking slack is the school. There are American communities that have begun to reckon with this imperative, but they are a small minority and the Antelope Valley is decidedly not among them. Beverley Louw's attempt at Lancaster High to replace the baroque array of "fragmented subcultures" that students tend to join with an old-fashioned, school-based culture was the exception. And her frustrations arose from more than just her students' academic deficits.

"Everything is in such flux, which unsettles kids," she told me one afternoon in her office. "The *homelessness* among kids

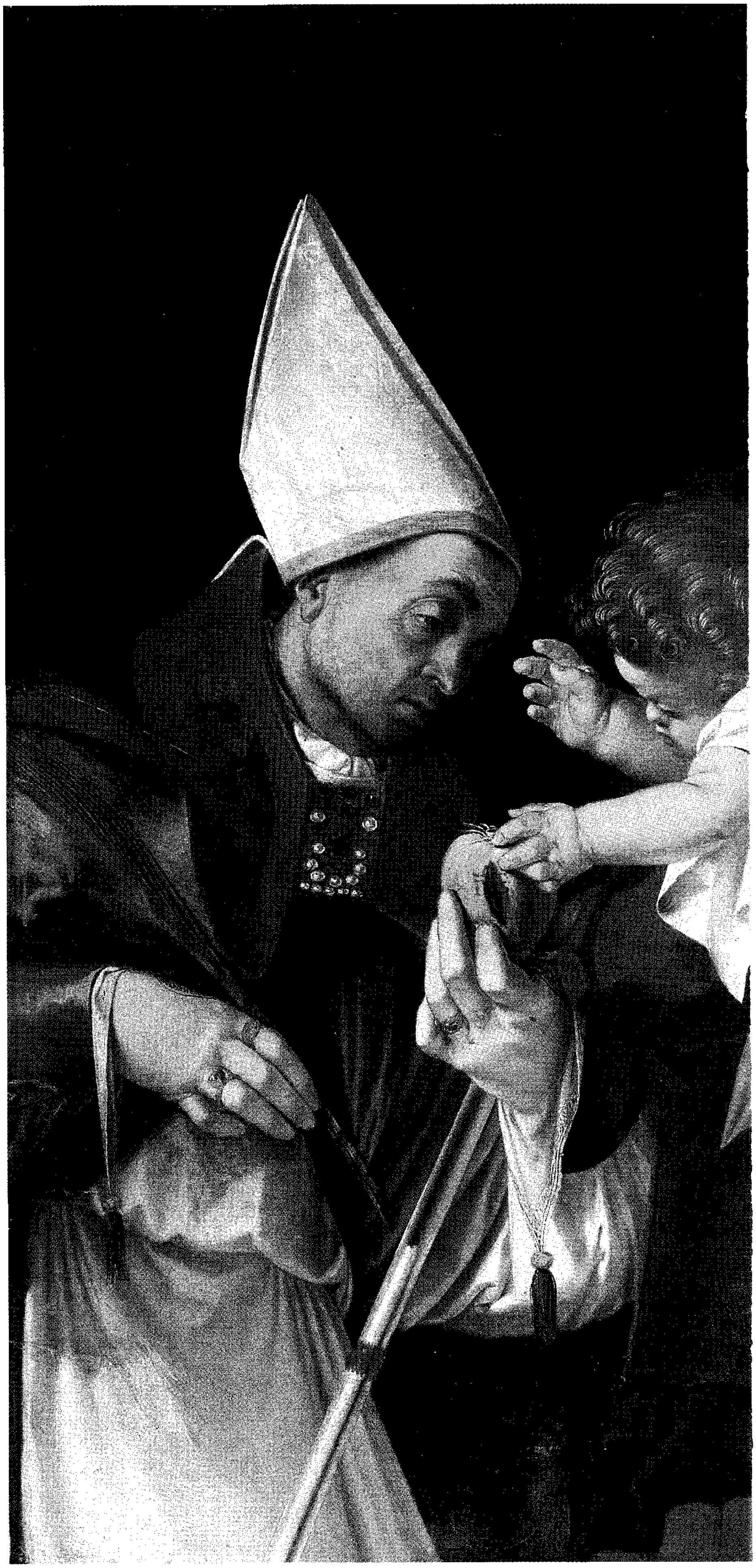
"First, we'll look for repressed memories of malpractice suits."

here is just enormous. It's invisible to outsiders, because they don't live on the streets, but they move from place to place, living with friends or relatives or whatever. And lack of supervision is the key, I believe, to most of their problems." Ms. Louw looked out a window onto a windblown parking lot, then went on. "I had a straight-A student commit suicide when I was principal of the continuation school. The kids said she did it on a dare. Her father came to the funeral in a yellow leather suit. I couldn't believe it. *A yellow leather suit.*"

Martha Wengert, a sociologist at Antelope Valley College, said, "This area has grown so fast that neighborhoods are not yet communities. Kids are left with this intense longing for identification." Gangs, race nationalism, and all manner of "beliefs" arose from this longing. I thought of Debbie Turner's inability to comprehend Mindy's enthusiasm for the likes of Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler. "The kids reach out to these historical figures," Dr. Wengert said. "But it's through TV, through comic books, through word-of-mouth. There are no books at home, no ideas, no sense of history." One thing the Valley's young people knew, however, Dr. Wengert said, was that the economic downturn of the nineteen-nineties was not cyclical, that the Cold War was over and the aerospace and defense jobs were not coming back. ♦

NATIONAL LOTTO

Lorenzo Lotto, the restless cinquecento painter whom Giorgio Vasari damned with faint praise in his "Lives of the Artists," is experiencing a renaissance of his own these days. Fifty of his works, mostly portraits and religious commissions executed during far-flung sojourns (to Bergamo, Treviso, the Marches), have arrived on these shores for the first time and are on exhibit at the National Gallery, in Washington, through March 1st. "Lorenzo Lotto," Peter Humfrey's assessment (just published by Yale), extends the favorable modern view of the itinerant painter: craggy, intimate, at once deeply religious and unflaggingly original, but, above all—as can be seen in his "Virgin and Child with Saints Ignatius of Antioch and Onophrius"—a humane portraitist who can hold his own among the Old Masters.



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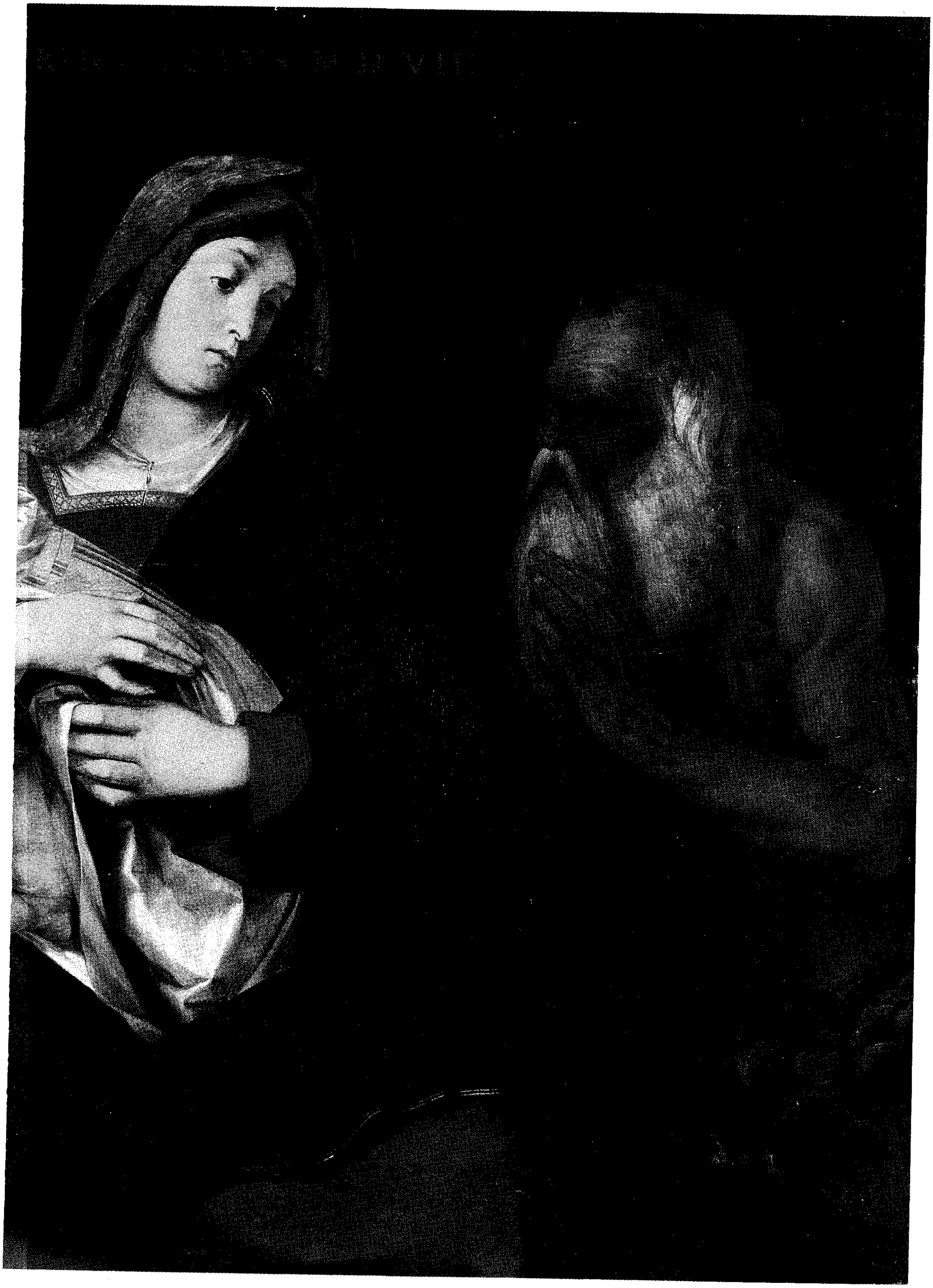

FICTION

ELK

A long way out of the woods.

BY RICK BASS

IT was Matthew who killed the elk. I was only trying to learn how it was done.

My first year in the valley, I knew next to nothing, though when only a week of hunting season remained and still I had no meat, I knew enough to ask Matthew for help. People told me he didn't like new people coming into the valley and that he wouldn't help me, wouldn't help anyone—but when I went to his cabin and asked, he said he would, just this once, and that I would have to watch carefully, and learn: he would only hunt an elk for me once.

We canoed across the Yaak River and went into the wilderness. We found a bull's tracks, and followed the bull for three days, killing it on the fourth.

Afterward, Matthew built a fire in the woods next to the elk to warm us as we went to work. There was plenty of dry wood and it was easy to make a roaring fire: its flames grew almost as tall as we were, and they lit up the woods. The orange light danced against the elk's hide and against his antlers, making it seem as if he had come back to life. In his final death leap the elk had got tangled in the blowdown and now hung there, several feet off the ground. Matthew crawled underneath and began cutting. There was a rasping sound of his knife against the coarse hair and thick skin and cartilage, and from time to time he had to stop and sharpen his knife with a whetstone.

"Nothing in the world dulls a steel blade like elk hair," he said. He was doing a neat job. "I'd like a stone knife someday, black obsidian," he said. I added wood to the fire. I would not have believed that you could skin such an animal. It was surely enough meat for the coming year.

By morning we had the elk skinned and the immense antlers sawed off. Matthew had brought a small wood-handled folding saw—its blade was now ruined—and he tossed it into the fire. The bull's immense hindquarters—heavier than a man's body—were hanging from trees. So, too, were the shoulders.

We filled our packs with the loose meat—all the neck roasts, tenderloins, neck loins, and lengths of backstrap like deep-red anacondas. In lifting the hindquarters and shoulders, we became covered with blood. I was glad that the bears were already in hibernation.

The fire had sprawled and wandered through the night. Ashes and charred half-lengths of timber lay in a circle thirty feet across: a testament to what had happened here.

We roasted some of the ribs over the coals of the fire and chewed on them for a long time. We ate a whole side of the trimmings from the elk skeleton—the bones were stripped clean and gleaming when we were done—and then broke the other side in half with the hatchet. We tied the rib cages to our packs like a frame; they would help hold in place the shifting weight of the meat, which was still warm against our backs. I gathered a few stones as we were about to leave and, not knowing why, stacked them where the elk had fallen, now a pile of hooves, shins, and hair.

Matthew carried the antlers—settled them over his shoulders upside down—and with their long tips and tines furrowing the snow behind him he looked as if he were in a yoke and plowing the snow. I carried the wet hide atop my pack of meat, increasing the weight of my pack up to around a hundred and thirty pounds. Matthew said it was important to carry out the extraneous stuff first—the antlers, the hide—before our resolve weakened and we were tempted to leave them behind for the wolves.

It began to snow again. I wondered where the other elk were, if they knew that our hunt for them was over.

We stayed on the ridges. Under such a load, our steps were small and slow. We travelled a mile, dropped our weight, then went back to where we'd left all the other meat, and carried it to the point we'd got to before—each of us carrying a hindquarter on his back, or dragging it behind like a sled.

And so we moved across the valley, slowly, as if in some eternal meat relay—continuously undoing the progress we'd made, working hours to move the whole mass only one mile, at which point we then started all over again. The winter-short days passed quickly, and we slept soundly through the nights.

THE snow kept coming. We dropped off one ridge down into a creek and ascended another, and Matthew said he knew where we were. After the second or third day, the ravens appeared. They landed in front of us and strutted with outstretched wings, drawing little tracings in the snow, barking and cawing in their voices that were alternately shrill and hoarse, as if they were hurling different languages at us. Sometimes they landed behind us, darted in and pecked at whatever section of the elk we were dragging, but usually they picked at the meat fragments in the snow.

On the third day there was a moment of startling beauty. We were walking in a fog so thick that we could barely see more than a few feet in front of us. We knew to stay on the ridge. Four ravens were following us, walking behind us in their penguin strut. And then to our left, to the west, a slot appeared in the fog, a slot of pale-blue sky, and through the slot there was a shaft of gold light illuminating

FILIP PAGOWSKI

the forest below us. The shaft was the only thing we could see in the storm. The wind was blowing north, the direction we were going, and for a while the shaft travelled with us. As it did, it kept revealing more of the same uncut, untouched forest. The impression it made was that the uncut forest would never end. In less than a minute, the shaft had moved on—the wind was about thirty miles an hour—but the sight has stayed with me, and neither Matthew nor I said anything about it to each other, though we did stop and watch it, as if unsure of what it was we were seeing.

WE ate on the elk as we travelled, but after four days I wanted bread or potatoes. I was tired of all meat. I wanted an apple pie, dense with sugar, and a hot bath.

The massive antlers had sunk lower on Matthew's shoulders, and the plow they made cut deeper in the snow. Sometimes their heavy tips struck a rock beneath the snow and made a *clinking* sound. The weight of the antlers was starting to wear Matthew's skin raw, even though he had cut a small strip of hide to use as a cushion. A thin red "Y" now ran down his back, merging just below his shoulders. The furrows in the snow behind him, wide as the antlers, looked like the boundaries for a small road, a lane, and within them we sometimes spotted the tracks of the creatures that were following us: the ravens, coyotes, and wolves.

We were descending slowly, and were beginning to see the tracks of other animals again—deer, moose, and elk, though the elk tracks were those of cows and calves, not bulls.

We were down out of the high country and into the dense forest. It was growing warmer at the lower elevation, so that, rather than snow falling, there was a sleety drizzle, which was more chilling than any storm or blizzard. We came across a dropped moose antler, resting upright on the snow—we could read his tracks leading to it, and leading away from it—and the antler, upturned, was full of water and slush from the sleet. We knelt and took turns drinking from it, without disturbing it. We were almost home. One more night, and the next day. A year's worth of meat, put away safely.

The "Y" on Matthew's back widened, but he was moving stronger again. I was shivering hard by now. I was drenched. For a long time the effort of hauling and skidding the meat had been enough to keep me warm, but now that effort wasn't enough. I was cold and I needed help from the outside. My body could no longer hold off the whole mass of winter. I was without reserves.

"Do you want to stop and light a fire?" Matthew asked, watching my slowing movements, my clumsiness, my giving-upness. I nodded, still lucid enough to know that hypothermia had arrived. Matthew seemed to be a great distance away, and I felt that he was studying me, evaluating me. We were no longer partners in the hunt, brothers in the hunt—brothers in anything—and as my mind began to close down, chamber by chamber, I had the feeling that Matthew was going to let me freeze: that he had run me into the ground, had let me haul out half the elk, and now, only a day's journey from town, he was going to let winter have me. He would carry the rest of the meat out himself, leaving me to disappear beneath the snow.

He stood there waiting. I knelt and slipped out of my pack. I then lost my balance and tipped over in the snow. Not thinking clearly—not thinking at all—I searched through my pack for matches, shivering. I found them, held the small box tightly in my gloved hands, then remembered that I needed wood.

Matthew continued watching me. He had not taken his pack off—as if he had no intention of stopping here anyway—and the antlers had been with him so long that they seemed to be growing out of him. I moved off into the trees and down a slope and began indiscriminately snapping twigs and gathering branches, dropping much of what I picked up. Matthew stayed up on the hill above, watching. The rain and sleet kept coming down. He was drenched, too—there was ice on his antlers—but he seemed to have a fire and a hardness in him that I knew I didn't have.

I heaped the branches, some green and some dry, into a small pile, and began striking matches; and the sodden pile of wood would not light. I tried until I was out of matches, then rose and went back up to my pack to look for more. I was moving slowly and wanted to lie down. I had to keep going, but I knew that I wasn't going to find any more matches.

"This way," Matthew said finally, taking a cigarette lighter out of his pack. "Look at me," he said. "Watch." He walked down to the nearest dead tree, an old wind-blasted fir tree, shrouded dense with black hanging lichen. "This is what you do," he said. His words came in breaths of steam rising into the rain. He stood under the canopy of the tree's branches and moss cloak and snapped the lighter a couple of times, holding it right up against the lichen tendrils.

On the third snap the lichen caught, burned blue for a moment, then leapt into quick orange flame.

It was like something chemical—the whole tree, or the shell of lichen around it, metamorphosed into bright crackling fire: the lichen burning explosively and the sudden shock of heat, the updraft, in turn lighting the lichen above, accelerating the rush of flame as if climbing a ladder. It was a forty-foot-tall tree, and it was on fire from top to bottom in about five seconds.

"That's how you do it," Matthew said, stepping back. I had stopped shivering, my blood heated by one last squeeze of adrenaline at the sight; but now, even as I watched the flames, the chill, and then the shivering, returned.

"You'd better get on over there," he said. "They don't burn long."

I walked over to the burning tree. There was a lot of heat; the snow in all directions glistened—but I knew that the heat wasn't going to last. Flaming wisps of lichen separated from the tree and floated upward in curls before cooling and descending. By the time they landed on me, they were almost burnt out—charcoal skeletons of the lichen. A few of the tree's branches burned and crackled, but that was pretty much it; the fire was gone.

I wouldn't say I was warm, but I had stopped shivering.

"Come on," Matthew said. "Let's go find another one." He set off into the rain, the antlers behind him plowing a path.

And that was how we came out of the mountains, in that last night and the

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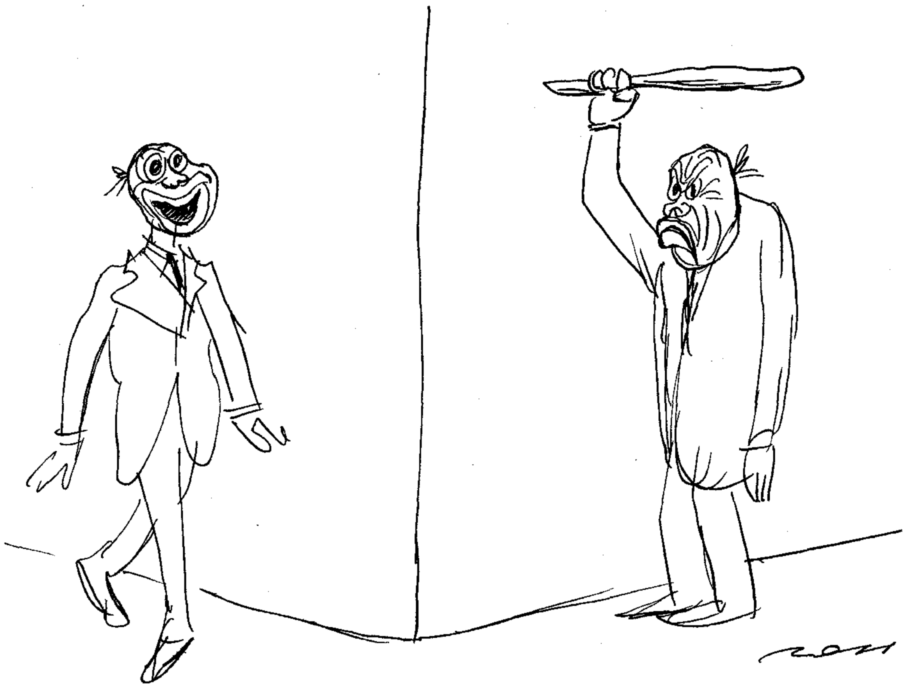

next day, moving from tree to tree—looking for the right one, properly dead—through the drizzle, from one tower of flame to the next, Matthew probing the right ones with his cigarette lighter, testing them, always choosing the right ones. That was how we walked through that night—the trees sizzling and steaming after we were done with them—and on into the gray rainy day. We were back into country that I knew well, even underneath all the snow. We were seeing the tracks of wolves, and finding some of their kills. I had stopped shivering, though we continued lighting tree torches—leaving a crooked, wandering path of them behind us.

I suspect that in twenty years I will still be able to trace our journey backward, back up the mountain from torched tree to torched tree. Some will be fallen and rotting black husks, others might still be standing. In twenty years, I'll be able to return to where it all started—that point where we first saw the elk, and then lost him, and then found him again, and killed him. From among the stones and ferns and forest, there will be a piece of charcoal, a fire-blackened rock, an antler in a tree, a rusting saw blade, even a scabbed-over set of initials, where Matthew marked his kill, although as the years go on, those initials will be harder to find, until finally you will have to know exactly where they are, and have some sort of guide, someone who has actually been there before, to show you.

THE rut was on as we approached town the next day—the giant bucks chasing the does—and though we were exhausted, we could see that we had to shoot a deer.

As we drew nearer the village—the forest ripe with the scent of rut musk—we saw a swarm of antlers, dozens of bucks prowling the woods, mesmerized by sex, by creation, by the needs of the future, and we were almost home when we saw the buck we wanted.

We saw him because he had seen us, and was coming up the hill toward us—or, rather, toward Matthew. He was drawn by the sight of the giant antlers strapped to Matthew's back. We were moving through dense brush and it's possible that was all he could see, and he came forward with a strange aggression. He was wet from the rain. His antlers were black-brown, from his having lived in a dark forest, and rose three feet above his head and extended beyond the tips of his outstretched ears. It did not seem possible that he could carry such a weight on his head. Matthew dropped to his knees. The deer stopped, then came closer, still entranced by the antlers, and Matthew raised his rifle and shot the deer through the neck, now not twenty yards away.

The deer's head snapped back, and we saw a thin pattern of blood spray across the snow behind him, but the deer did not drop. Instead it whirled and ran down the hill, hard and strong.

I wondered if Matthew could ever finish anything gracefully.

We had to track it.

The snow was deep and slushy. There was little if any blood trail to follow, and the big buck's tracks merged with hundreds of others: the carnival of the rut. We stood there in the hissing, steady rain, breathing our own milky vapors.

"Fuck," Matthew said. He looked down toward the river in the direction the buck had run. He dropped his pack in the snow. The bloody "Y" on his chest was the same as the one on his back; the two together were like the delicate, perfect, world-shaped markings on the wings of some obscure tropical butterfly. I dropped my pack as well. A blood trail was beginning to form on my own back and chest.

Not to be wearing a pack after having carried one for so long gave us a feeling like flight; as if, suddenly, we could have gone for another seventy-five miles. We rested a moment, then donned our packs again. The rain and slush continued to beat down on us. We kept stopping to rest, ass-whipped. We began lighting trees again—tree after tree, following the wounded buck's tracks.

A drop of blood here; a loose hair there.

We found the buck down at the river, in a backwater slough, thrashing around in six feet of water, having broken through a skin of thawing ice as he tried to cross. We watched him for a moment as he swam in circles with only his head and the tower of antlers above the water. He was choking on his blood, coughing sprays of it across the water with each exhalation, and swallowing blood with each breath—the bullet had missed an artery, but severed a vessel—and his face was a red mask of blood.

He glared at us as he swam—a red king, defiant. It was a strange sight, those giant antlers going around and around in the small pond—like some new creature being born into the world. Matthew raised his rifle, waited for the deer to swim back around, closer to the edge of the shore.

The deer continued to watch us as it swam—head held high, drowning in blood. Matthew shot it in the neck again, breaking it this time, and the deer stopped swimming. The antlers sank.

We sat and stared at it for a long time—watching it motionless through the refraction of water—as if expecting it to come back to life.

Another buck, following the trail of the giant's hock musk, appeared on the other side of the pond, lowered its head, trying to decipher the cone of scent that had drifted its way.

We travelled upriver to where Matthew had left the canoe. It was under a shell of snow. We got it out and went and got the elk and loaded it, part by part, into the canoe, until the canoe was low in the water. Dusk was coming on again and we could see a few lights across the river, the lights of town. We had been gone only two weeks but it felt like a century.

I stayed behind while Matthew made two crossings with the meat; then he came back for me. The rain had stopped and the sky was clearing and Matthew said we had to get the deer out now as the pond would freeze thick if we waited until the next day.

We waded out into the pond together. The water was slightly warmer than the air. Under water the deer was light, and we were able to muscle him awkwardly up to the shore. Then we dragged him over to the canoe—gutted him quickly—loaded him, and set out across one more time, riding lower than ever. Freezing seemed to be a more imminent danger than drowning, but we reached the other shore, sledded the canoe up onto the gravel, and finally we quit; abandoned the meat, hundreds of pounds of it, only a short distance from home, and ran stumbling and falling up the hill toward town.

Lights were on in the bar. We went straight in and lay down next to the big woodstove, shivering and in pain. The bartenders, Artie and Charlie, came over with blankets and hides and began helping us out of our wet clothes and wrapping the hides around us. They started heating water on the stove for baths and making hot tea for us to drink; it was the first fluid we'd had in days that was neither snow nor cold creek water, and the heat of it made us vomit the second the hot tea hit our stomachs. Artie looked at the meat we had spit up and said, "They got an elk." ♦

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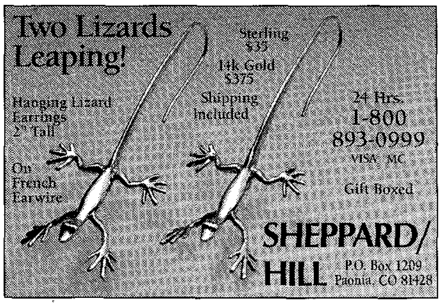

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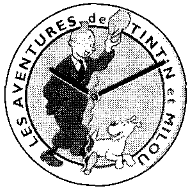

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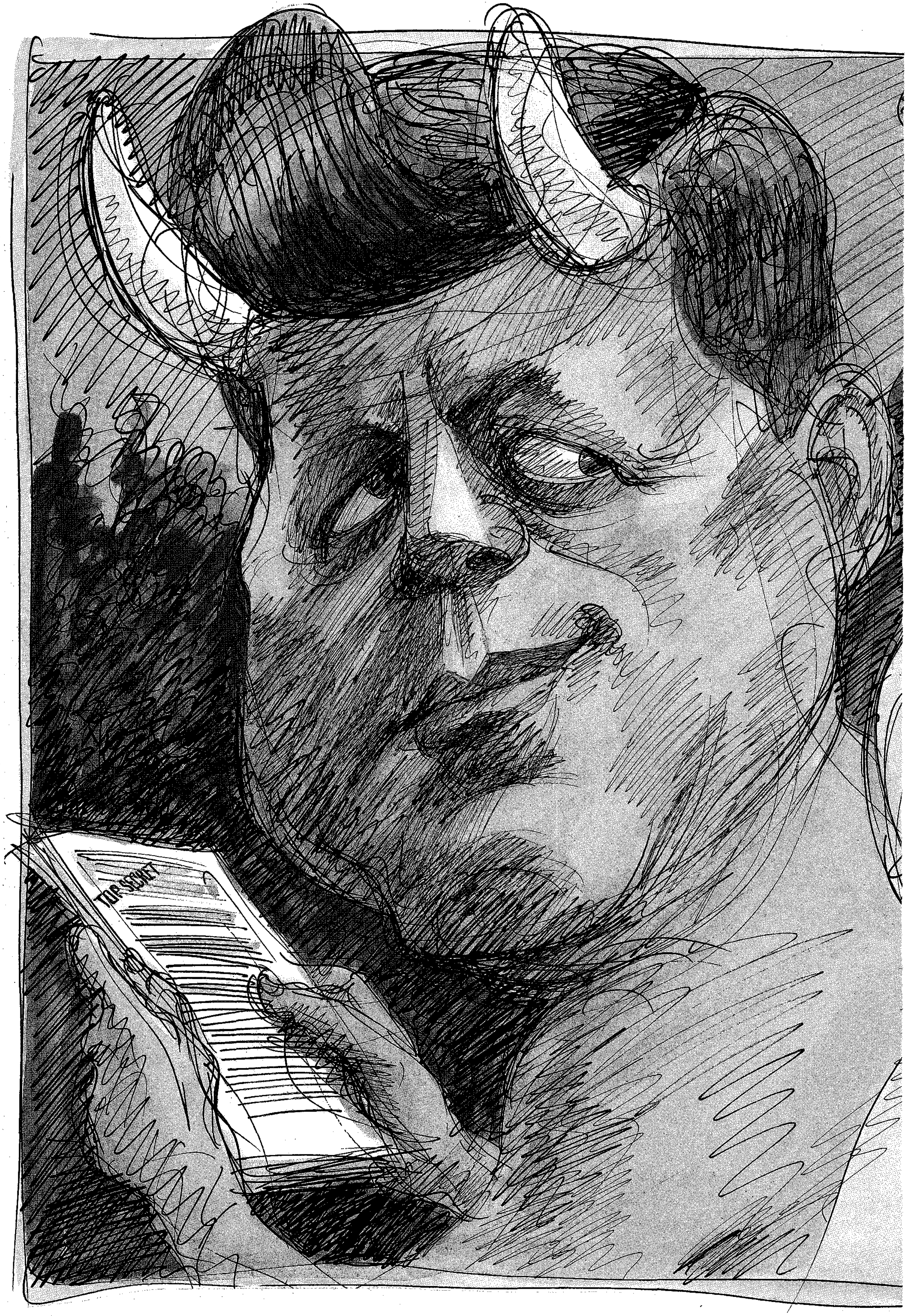
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Why do we still want to defend J.F.K.?

BY GORE VIDAL

EARLY spring, 1959. Dutchess County, New York. My telephone rang. "Senator Kennedy is calling." It was Evelyn Lincoln, Jack's secretary. (Her employer hadn't yet metamorphosed into the imperial acronym J.F.K.) Years later, Mrs. Lincoln wrote a fairly unrevealing memoir of her years with Kennedy—a pity, since she knew a great deal about him, including the subject of his call to me. Jack came on the line. No hello. No how are you. "That friend of yours up there, Dick Rovere. He's writing a piece for *Esquire* about 'Kennedy's last chance to be President' or something. Well, it's not true. Get to him. Tell him I don't have Addison's disease. If I did, how could I keep up the schedule I do?" Many more staccato sentences. No time to lose. Primaries were coming up; then the Convention. Before I went down the road to see Rovere, I looked up Addison's disease: a deterioration of the adrenal function that can lead to early death. No wonder Jack was panicky. Even a hint that he was mortally ill . . .

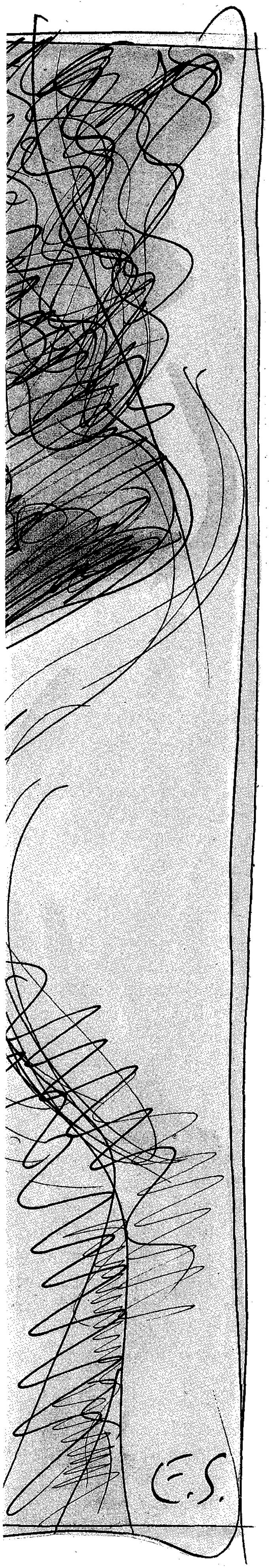
Background: In 1953, Jack married Jacqueline Bouvier, whose stepfather, H. D. Auchincloss, had been my stepfather until, in a fit of generosity, my mother passed him, like a well-stuffed safety-deposit box, on to Jackie's needy mother. Through Jackie, I got to know Jack; delighted in his darkly sardonic humor, not unlike my own—or Jackie's, for that matter. In due course, I shifted from the noble—that is, Adlai Stevensonian—side of the Democratic Party to the raffish gang of new kids from Massachusetts, by way of Riverdale, N.Y. Then I, too, went into active politics; by 1960 I would be the Democratic-Liberal candidate for Congress from New York's highly conservative Twenty-ninth District, and our party's Presidential candidate was a matter of poignant interest to me. When Jack rang me—the first and last time—I was eager for him to be nominated, even though I had already seen a poll that indicated that his Roman Catholicism could cost our district the election. In the end, I was to get 43.3 per cent of the vote to his 38 per cent; this was very satisfying to me. Unfortunately, the Republican incumbent congressman got 56.7 per cent. This was less satisfying. "Your loss," Jack grinned afterward, "was a real tragedy for our nation." Whatever else, he was funny.

Richard H. Rovere wrote the much read and admired Letter from Washington for *The New Yorker*. "The Washington Letter as mailed from vital Rhinebeck, New York," Jack used to chuckle. "That shows real dedication. Endless tracking down of sources. In-depth analyses on the spot . . ." But Dick was now on to something that could cost Jack the nomination.

Rovere lived in a gingerbread frame house on a tree-lined street in Rhinebeck. He had a large, nearly bald head with patchy red skin and a scarred neck. Jack had asked me if he was a drinker. I said no, I thought it was eczema. Thick glasses so magnified his eyes that he seemed like some rare aquatic specimen peering back at you through aquarium glass. In youth, Rovere had been a Communist. Later, when he saw that the Marxist god had failed, he left the Party; he also must have made some sort of inner vow that never again would he be taken in by anyone or anything that required mindless loyalty. As of spring, 1959, Rovere was inclined to support Stevenson, who had not yet made up his mind about running for a third time.

I began, to the point, "Kennedy does not have Addison's disease."

Rovere insisted that he did. He had ac-



The Kennedys were an eighteenth-century "amoral" couple who would have fitted with ease into "Les Liaisons Dangereuses."

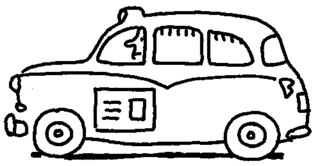
EDWARD SOREL

quired the journalist's habit of always being, no matter what the subject, more knowledgeable than anyone else in the room. I asked him how *he* knew. "A friend's wife has Addison's, and they took her to the Lahey Clinic in Boston where they have all the latest procedures, including one that was cooked up for Kennedy. They put a pellet under your skin and it's supposed to drip adrenaline into you for a week or so and then you get another pellet."

I used Jack's arguments. How explain his tremendous energy? How could he have been campaigning so furiously ever since 1956 if he was ill, etc.? Dick was unimpressed. He had the doctor's name; he had a lot of clinical data. He was already writing the piece. *Esquire* had been advertising it. No turning back.

Question for today: Did I suspect that the story was true? I suppose, in court, I'd say I'm not a pathologist and so how could I know? Jack had had, all his life, numerous mysterious illnesses. Four times, he had been given the last rites. The yellow-gold complexion (typical of Addison's) was explained as the result of wartime malaria. I suppose now, with hindsight, I had already made up my mind that if he thought he could survive four years of the Presidency "vigorously"—his key word that season—as well as he had survived four years of campaigning, then whatever was wrong with him was under control. Thus one embraces, so painlessly, falsity.

Dick's piece duly appeared with no mention of Addison's disease. I did bet him a hundred dollars, even money, that Jack would be nominated and elected. Dick was cheerfully condescending. "At those odds, I can get you a lot more bets." In November, he paid off. Oddly—well, not so oddly—Dick and I never again alluded to our business.



Point to story: How easily so many people—best and brightest as well as worst and dullest—got caught up in the Kennedy bandwagon. The amount of lying that went on in that era was, the ineffable Nixon to one side, unique in our homely history.

Three years later, Rovere and I had a row that pretty much put an end to our friendship. Again the subject was Kennedy lying. The Cuban missile crisis of October, 1962, was resolved between Kennedy and Khrushchev with a secret deal: we would remove our missiles from Turkey if the Soviets withdrew theirs from Cuba. Neither side would give the game away. No gloating. No publicity. But, as always, there was a leak. To plug it, Jack got his old friend the journalist Charles Bartlett to write a *Saturday Evening Post* article declaring that the bold macho leader of the free world could never have backed down on anything. J.F.K. had simply ordered the Russians off the premises, and they had slunk away. In a fit of thoughtful malice, Jack decided that this would be a good moment to knife his ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, and he added that "that old woman Adlai" had wanted the President to make a deal. Bartlett wrote that the resolute Jack never made deals with darkness.

I learned what had happened from Bartlett's assistant: my half sister, Jackie's stepsister, who had heard Bartlett discussing details of the article with Kennedy over the telephone. I repeated the matter to Rovere. "No!" he said, which was his response to whatever anyone said. Dick got very red. A heavy smoker, he almost vanished in a blue-white cloud. To my amazement, he was, by now, so much a Kennedy loyalist that not only could he not believe so vicious a tale but if it was by any chance even remotely true he was done with Kennedy forever, presumably like that other god that failed him.

Now I read in "One Hell of a Gamble," a fascinatingly detailed narrative of the Cuban missile crisis (by Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali; Norton; $27.50), that an aide to McGeorge Bundy was sent round to Bartlett to tell him that Stevenson "had angered the President by suggesting that the United States pull out its missiles in Turkey in an exchange for the Soviet missiles in Cuba. . . . Poor Adlai Stevenson, the two-time failed Democratic Presidential nominee . . . was being hung out to dry." Later, "Bartlett had a private dinner with the President. He handed over the draft of the article. . . . As Bartlett recalls today, the President 'marked it up.' "

"I told you so," I muttered to myself, in lieu of the now dead Rovere, when I read the confirmation of Jack's lively malice.

THIS is a deliberately roundabout way of getting to Seymour Hersh ("The Dark Side of Camelot," Little, Brown; $26.95) and his current collision with what I have just been describing: the great disinformation apparatus put in place forty years ago, a monster that even now continues to metastasize within academe and the media to such a degree that myth threatens to overthrow history. Spin is all. Spin of past as well as present.

For some reason, Hersh's "revelations" are offensive to many journalists, most of whom are quick to assure us that although there is absolutely nothing new in the book (what a lot they've kept to themselves!), Hersh has "proved" nothing. Of course, there is really no way for anyone ever to prove much of anything, short of having confessions from participants, like the four Secret Service men who told Hersh about getting girls in and out of Jack's bed. But when confronted with these smoking guns the monkeys clap their hands over their eyes and ears and chatter, "Foul allegations by soreheads." The responses to Hersh's book made me feel as if I were in a deranged time warp. Since there is not, in any foreseeable future, a Kennedy candidate for President, why is there so much fury and fuss at Hersh's attempt to let daylight in on old, old black magic? Sufficient, surely, to the day is the blessed martyr Paula Jones, small potatoes, perhaps, but our very own tuber rose.

Incidentally, how our masters the synergists must be tied in knots. Remember, back in the eighties: wouldn't it be wonderful if you could own a network *and* a studio that made films to show on it as well as magazines and newspapers to praise them in *and* a publishing house for source material *and* . . . ? Well, now we have the marvellous comedy of Hersh's book being published by Little, Brown, which is owned by Time Warner, and reviewed negatively-nervously, nervously-negatively by *Time* (same ownership), while *Newsweek* (owned by the Washington Post Company and still, perhaps, influenced by Kennedy's old friend Ben Bradlee) denounces Hersh, while ABC (owned by Disney) prepares a TV documentary that is tied in with . . . Many years ago, there used to be something called "conflict of interest." No longer, I'm afraid. Today, we all bathe in the same river. It will be a relief when Bill Gates finally owns everything and there will be just the one story.

Now let me declare my interest. I got a second telephone call thirty-six years after the one from Jack. This was from Seymour Hersh, whom I'd never met. He told me about the book he was writing and why he was ringing me. He had just read my memoirs, "Palimpsest." "You have some new stuff on Kennedy in your book," he said, "and I wondered why I hadn't heard about it before. I got curious. I got a researcher to check your American reviews, and I found that not one mentioned all the new things you'd come up with. Why did nobody write about you spending a couple days with Kennedy at Hyannis Port during the Berlin crisis and keeping notes?" I gave him my theory. Few American reviewers actually read an entire book, particularly if the author is known to hold opinions that are not those of the conglomerate for which the reviewer is writing. Also, since I'm a novelist, my books are given to English teachers to review, rather than to history teachers, say—which is possibly no great improvement if they serve the empire too well or, worse, grow misty-eyed when they hear "If Ever I Would Leave You."

"Well," said Hersh, "I'm glad I got to you." Hersh is brisk and bumptious. "I got some questions for you. That detail in your book about how he was having sex in the tub with this girl on top of him and then, as he's about to come, he pushes her head underwater. Why?"

Now, I think that I am one of the few Americans who honestly don't want to know about the sex lives of real people as opposed to fictional ones, as in pornography. Like Kennedy, I came out of the Second World War, where a great promiscuous time was had by just about all who could hack it sexually. Most of us were not into warm, mature, meaningful relationships. We were cool, "immature," meaningless. Getting laid as often as possible was the name of our game, and I don't regret a moment so spent. Neither, I am sure, does Jack's ghost. But this is hardly the right attitude at century's end, when the dull heirs and heiresses of Cotton Mather are like Seventh-Day Adventists with St. Vitus' dance, darting about with scarlet "A"s in one hand and, in the other, emblematic rosy curved cocks as big around as a—*quarter*?

I explained to Sy that the shock of the head being shoved underwater would cause vaginal contractions, thus increasing the pleasure of a man's own orgasm. "Crazy," he said. "So how do you know this?" I said I'd been told the story years ago by an actress Jack and I both knew. Sy was exuberant. "Well, I got four retired Secret Service men—serious guys—and one of them told me how he would bring

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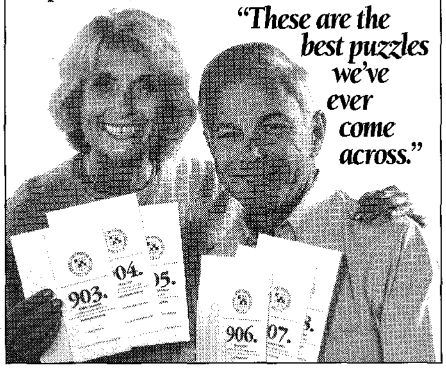

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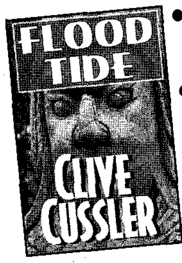

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the President a hooker when he was lying on his back in the tub and then she'd get on top of him and then when he was ready the Secret Service guy standing behind her would shove her head underwater. Well, I couldn't really believe this. But now you tell the same story. You both can't be making it up." A bit irritated, I said not only did I have no reason to make the story up, I could never have thought it up.

PREDICTABLY, the press frenzy over Hersh's book has centered on J.F.K.'s promiscuity. This is believed to sell newspapers. But then no other country, save our edgy adjunct the U.K., bothers with the sexual lives of its public men, on the ground that their official lives are sufficiently dispiriting, when not downright dangerous, to occupy what small attention the average citizen of the average country can force himself to give to political figures.

This was the case in the United States before mid-century. Private lives were dealt with by gossip columnists, often in what were called "blind" items (principals unnamed), while public matters were kept to the news columns. The blurring of the two began when vast amounts of money were suddenly required to fight the Second World War and then, immediately after, to pay for our ever-expanding and still ongoing empire, set in place in 1950. The empire requires huge expenditures for more and more bombers that do not fly in the rain, as well as the maintenance, with secret bribes and threats, of our NATO-ASEAN axis, which girdles the thick rotundity of the globe itself. With that much money being wrung from the taxpayer, the last thing that those who govern us want is any serious discussion of what is actually happening to all "our" money.

Put bluntly, who collects what money from whom in order to spend on what is all there is to politics, and in a serious country should be the central preoccupation of the media. It is also a very interesting subject, at least to those who pay taxes, which in this country means the folks at home, not the conglomerates that own everything. (Taxes on corporate profits once provided the government with more than forty per cent of its revenues—almost as much as the personal income tax provided—but taxes on corporate profits today contribute a little over twelve per cent.) During Kennedy's three-year Administration, he increased the defense budget of the Eisenhower years by seventeen billion dollars. This was one of the biggest, quickest increases in our history. That was—is—the story that ought to have been covered. Unfortunately, politics is the last thing a government like ours wants us to know about. So how do they divert us from the delicate subject?

Until recently, anyone who questioned the Pentagon budget, say, was apt to be labelled a Communist, and that would be that: he could lose his job; become unemployable. This is diversionary politics at its crudest. When Communism went away, sex came into its lurid own as the diversionary smear of choice—a peculiarly American specialty, by the way. Once the imaginary teams, straight and fag, had been established at the start of our century, the fag smear was an irresistible means of destruction. It was used, unsuccessfully, against Adlai Stevenson, while Jack and Bobby would giggle as they argued over which of them first thought to call James Baldwin "Martin Luther Queen."

Basically, misuse of tax money is the interesting scandal. Much of the expensive imperial changeover started by Truman was institutionalized by Kennedy's policy of constant overt and covert foreign confrontation. But Hersh, aware that this is pretty much a non-subject for mass media and most academics, must first get the folks into his sideshow tent. Hence the highlighting of Jack's sexual shenanigans. Later, Hersh does get around to politics—Cuba, Vietnam—and though he has new insights and information, his critics generally fail to respond coherently. They rehash such weighty matters as whether or not J.F.K. briefly married a Palm Beach girl and did his friend Chuck Spalding remove the records from the Palm Beach courthouse. A Camelot court joke circa 1961: Anyone married in Palm Beach in the year 1947 is now no longer married, since Joe Kennedy, while destroying Jack's records, tore out a whole year's worth of marriage registrations.

TYPICAL of the critics is Evan Thomas, in *Newsweek*, who notes skeptically that Hersh's sources include a "mob lawyer" who allegedly brokered a meeting in Chicago between Sam Giancana and Joe Kennedy at which Joe is supposed to have enlisted organized-crime support within Chicago's labor unions, providing much of the hundred-and-nineteen-thousand-vote margin by which Jack won the 1960 election. Another Hersh source is "Tina Sinatra, who says her father Frank acted as a go-between for the Kennedys and Giancana." Although daughters are not taken too seriously, by and large, in the still sexist shady cellars of public life, let me attest that Tina Sinatra is a most intelligent woman who knows a great deal about what went on in those days. The writer does concede that: "All [this is] possible—but Hersh never stops to ask why the Kennedys needed Giancana to fix the Chicago election when they had Mayor Richard Daley's machine to stuff the ballot box." "What's still missing," he writes more in anger than in sorrow, "is the kind of solid proof that would rewrite history." Well, it would be nice, but where would you find such proof? Truman's National Security State, still in place as of this morning, has seen to it that miles of our history, archives, and "secrets" have been shredded, deep-sixed, made over into frog princes, for the delectation of the dummies we are, collectively, taken to be.

In the tangled weave of human events, there is no *solid* proof. Particularly when governments, with everything to hide or distort, can do so with electronic ease, scattering their misinformation like confetti all over, as well as under, the Internet. At best, what we get are self-serving tales from survivors, not to mention the odd forger of genius. And spin.

Predictably, one of Hersh's chief attackers is Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (sic—the Jr., that is). Ever eager for distinction like that of his father, the historian Arthur Schlesinger, young Arthur bestowed on himself his father's middle name so that he could call himself "Junior," thus identifying himself with an already famous brand name in academe. Later, his infatuation with the Kennedys earned him the sobriquet "the tenth Kennedy," the brilliant if pudgy child that Joe and Rose Kennedy had never had.

"I *worked* at the White House," Junior told the New York *Times*. "No doubt, some things happened, but Hersh's capacity to exaggerate is unparalleled." This is curiously and carefully phrased. In a sense, as the weight of the evidence mounts, it is already quite plain to all but the most enthralled that Hersh's case, slapdash as it often is, is essentially true, if not Truth. Although "I worked at the White House" sounds as if Schlesinger were in on everything, he was not; he was neither a policymaker nor an intimate. Kennedy made a cold division between the help and his friends—"his white-trash friends," as Schlesinger observed bitterly and, I fear, accurately to me. Schlesinger amused Jack, who liked to call him "the film critic from *Show* magazine," his other job. But should Arthur ever say that he had no idea about the Kennedy brothers' dalliance, let us say, with Marilyn Monroe, one has only to look at the photograph from the night of the birthday gala for the President. The two Kennedy lads are leaving Monroe, while off to one side stands swinger Arthur, glass in hand, beaming like Emil Jannings in "The Blue Angel," only he has two male Marlene Dietrichs, the Kennedy brothers, to be demoralized by.

NOT all of the press has been trash. In *Slate*, a mysterious apparition of a paper edited by "On the left, I'm Michael Kinsley," as he used to say on the wondrously silly program "Crossfire," Jacob Weisberg zeroes in on one of the most interesting bits of news Hersh has brought us, demonstrating the power—and corruption—of the fabled military-industrial complex that Kennedy did so well by.

In August, 1962, the Los Angeles apartment of a beautiful young woman, Judith Campbell Exner, was broken into. She had been having the usual off-and-on couplings with J.F.K., as well as with Sam Giancana, and there was an F.B.I. stakeout on her apartment. The break-in was observed by the agents on watch, and they identified the perpetrators as the two sons of the head of security for General Dynamics, which a few months later received an "otherwise inexplicable" six-and-a-half-billion-dollar defense contract. Hersh concludes that General Dynamics used the information about Exner to blackmail Kennedy into giving it the contract. Hersh admits that he can't *prove* this: despite five years' effort, the two intruders into Exner's apartment would not talk to him. Hugh Sidey, once *Time's* White House correspondent, said on Larry King's television program that Hersh, in effect, is making it all up for his "evil book." But then the good Sidey never met a President he couldn't worship. On the other hand, I tend to believe this story. First, it is the way our world works. Second, it is the way the Kennedys operated. Third, defense contractors will do anything when billions of dollars are at stake, and, finally, in a well-run world the Presi-

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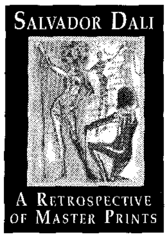

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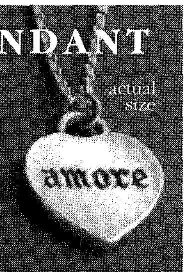

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dent involved should have been found out, impeached, and tried.

Weisberg is confused by "minor inconsistencies": "Hersh relates one anecdote about a Secret Service agent having to prevent the first lady from finding out for herself what she suspected was going on in the White House swimming pool. Later in the book, Hersh describes Jackie Kennedy's strenuous efforts to *avoid* catching J.F.K. in action" (my italics). But this is not a contradiction, only sloppy writing. Jackie knew all about Jack's sex life in the White House and before. What she did not want was any sort of confrontation with his playmates. The Kennedys were an eighteenth-century "amoral" couple, together for convenience. They would have fitted, with ease, into "Les Liaisons Dangereuses." I mean this very much as praise, though others affect shock. Paradoxically, toward the end of their marriage they actually established something very like a friendship. She said to me, as early as their first year in the White House, "We never actually got to know each other before the election. He was always off somewhere campaigning. Then, when we did get to this awful place, there we were, finally, just the two of us." His sexual partners were to her simply anonymous physical therapists. I suspect that's what they were to him, too.

In December, 1959, Jackie asked me to a charity costume ball at the Plaza. "I'll put you at Jack's table, so he'll have someone to talk to. Just ignore what I'm placing between you. She's very beautiful. Very stupid. She's also just arrived from England, so Jack will have first crack at it." "It," not "her."

We sat at a round table with eight or so other guests. Jack's costume was a holster with two six-shooters and a bandanna around his neck. He puffed a cigar and gazed intently at the blond girl between us. She was very beautiful. "You're in politics, aren't you?" Thus she broke the ice. I was curious to see Jack in action. "Uh . . . well, yes, I am. I'm . . . uh, running for President."

"That's so fascinating!" she exclaimed. "And will you win?"

"Well, it won't be easy . . ."

"Why not?"

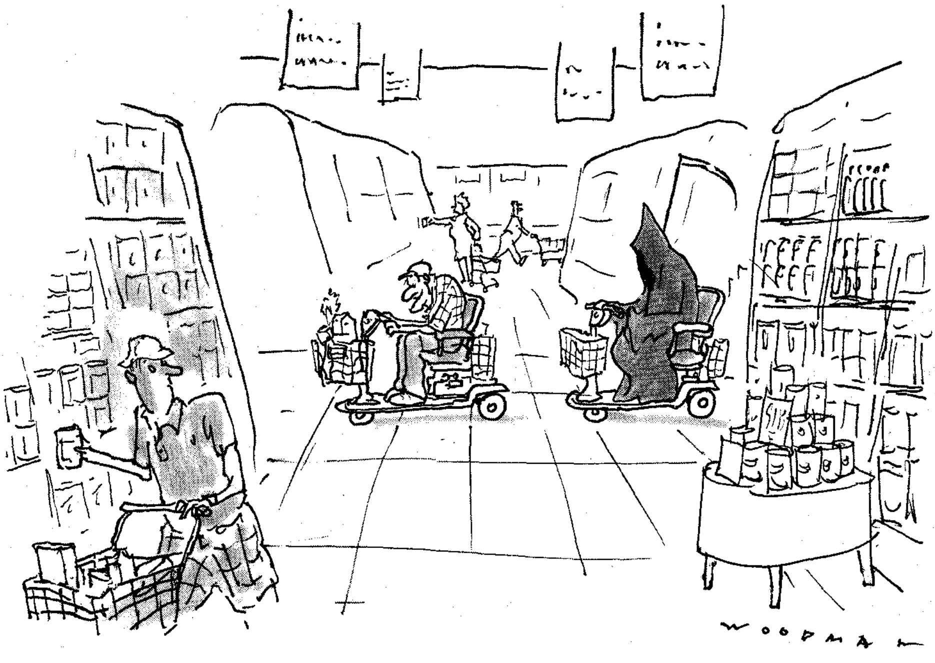
"Well, you see, I'm . . . uh, Catholic . . ."

"But what's that got to do with anything?"

"Oh, Gore, *you* tell her." I did, and then he and I talked politics across her: not a woman's court, Camelot.

To this day, Kennedy loyalists point to the missile crisis as a sign of J.F.K.'s superb statesmanship, when it is obvious that even to have got oneself into such a situation was hardly something you'd want to write mother, much less Rose, about. Certainly you don't prepare invasions of Cuba and repeatedly try to kill Castro without encouraging Castro to egg on the Soviets to what proved to be a mad adventure.

Incidentally, those Kennedy apologists who deny that J.F.K. knew anything about the various C.I.A.-Mafia plots to murder Castro are nicely taken care of by Robert Scheer in the Los Angeles *Times*. "The entire nefarious business is documented in excruciating detail," he writes, "in 'Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro,' a 133 page memorandum prepared in 1967 by C.I.A. Inspector General J. S. Earman for Director Richard Helms." The report was so hot that all copies were destroyed except one "ribbon copy," which was declassified in 1993. Scheer also notes "that Giancana was a key player in the effort to overthrow Castro and that the President's brother, the country's top law-enforcement official, knew all about it."



The Kennedy brothers put a lot of pressure on the C.I.A. to take care of Castro. When—and how—these callow young men got it into their heads that to them belonged the power of life and death over others is more of a metaphysical than a political question. We all know by heart their story: crook pro-Nazi father makes fortune; drives boys to a political peak unavailable to him. But there was always something curiously brittle about the two murdered sons. They were physically fragile. Hence, the effort of will to drive themselves hard, politically and sexually. As their non-admirer Eugene McCarthy, former senator and forever poet, observed, "Isn't it curious that they always played touch football and never football."

Currently, the heirs to Camelot are pointing to the just released tapes that J.F.K. made of himself during October of 1962. When he was ready to address his council, he would secretly switch on a recording machine. The others did not know they were being immortalized, and the nuke-'em-all military men are chilling. J.F.K. is cautious: on the record. Robert Manning, in the international edition of *Newsweek*, gently made fun of the way the whole situation is now being depicted. "As one who sat in on some of those White House deliberations in the President's cabinet room, I believe that the case can be made that the dangers of that 13-day interlude in October 1962 have been greatly exaggerated." Manning was an assistant secretary of state; later the *Atlantic Monthly* editor. His case is simple. Whatever Khrushchev might want to do in extremis, we had five thousand nuclear warheads ready to erase the Soviet Union; and they had only between seventy-five and three hundred. "All those factors dictated a peaceful settlement." The Russian general who recently said that Moscow had given the commanders in Cuba permission to use nuclear weapons *at will* "was a pompous windbag, and his claim proved to be patently untrue." So much for the iron nerve, cool wisdom of Sidey's hero.

To further undo J.F.K.'s delicate physical balance, along with the cortisone that he took regularly, there was his reliance on—addiction to, in fact—the amphetamines that the shady drug dispenser Dr. Max Jacobson regularly injected him with. It was through Chuck Spalding that Max entered J.F.K.'s life. Max made more than thirty recorded visits to the White House; travelled with the President; provided him with shots that he could give himself. So, in addition to cortisone, which can have dangerous side effects—a sense of misplaced, as it were, euphoria—the President was now hooked on speed. According to Jacobson's memoirs, Bobby was sufficiently concerned to want the medicine analyzed. " 'I don't care if it's horse piss,' " Jacobson quoted Kennedy as saying. " 'It's the only thing that works.' " In 1975, Max's license to practice medicine was revoked.

In Hersh's interviews with the Secret Service men, sex and drugs to one side, one is struck by how little actual work Jack got done. There were many days when Kennedy "didn't work at all. He'd come down late, go to his office. There were meetings—the usual things—and then he had pool time before his nap and lunch. . . . We didn't know what to think." My own impression, reading this, was how lucky we were that he wasn't busy all the time, because when he did set his hand to the plow Cuba got invaded and Castro was set up for assassination, while American troops were sent to fight in Vietnam, and the Diem brothers, our unsatisfactory viceroys in that unhappy country, were put to death in a coup, with White House blessing if not direct connivance.

In a way, the voices of the Secret Service men are the most damning of all, and I was prepared for what I call the Historians' Herndon Maneuver. William Herndon was for seventeen years Lincoln's law partner and shared an office with him. Herndon is the principal historical source for those years, except when Lincoln told Herndon that he had contracted syphilis in youth and had a hard time getting rid of it. Herndon wrote this after the President's death. The Lincoln priesthood's response to the syphilis charge is Pavlovian: Herndon was a disreputable drunk and not to be relied on—except when he is. As I read Hersh, I knew that the Kennedy zealots would say the same about the Secret Service man who mentions Jack's nongonorrheal urethritis and all the rest of it. On Larry King, a professor appeared along with Hugh Sidey. He conceded that J.F.K. had a "squalid covert life." Then, when one of the Secret Service men was named, it was Sidey who executed the Herndon Maneuver: the agent later had a problem with "alcohol."

I think Hersh comes to some wrong conclusions, inevitable considering his task. Incidentally, it is ridiculous to accuse him of not being a serious, sober historian, careful to footnote his way through a past that very few American academics could even begin to deal with. After all, if they were competent to do the job, what effect would it have on those powerful entities and personages who endow universities? Hersh is an old-style muckraker. The fact that he's found more muck in this particular Augean stable than most people want to acknowledge is hardly his fault.

I don't believe, however, that Lyndon Johnson blackmailed Jack into taking him as Vice-President, which is what Hersh suspects. Although I certainly was not in the allegedly uncrowded room when the decision was made, I was a member of the New York State delegation, and I was present in Los Angeles as the candidates came around, one by one, to work us over. (Tammany Hall had already committed us to Kennedy—the highest form of democracy.) Johnson entered the room in a blaze of TV lights. He was no more manic than usual. Very tall, with a huge head, and a gift for colorful invective, he had taken to calling Kennedy, more or less in private, "that spavined hunchback." He discussed his own recent heart attack—before any of us could. He was good as new now. But in the hospital he *had* wondered if he should go ahead and buy this blue suit he had ordered just before the attack. "Finally, I told Lady Bird, O.K., go buy it. Either way, I'll be using it." As he was leaving, he stopped to speak to several delegates. I was too far away to hear him. Later, I was told that he had mentioned something about Jack's "illness." He had been vague, but by evening Addison's disease was being talked about. If Johnson had gone there to take second place, he would certainly not have mentioned Jack's health. In any case, none of us could imagine why the omnipotent majority leader of the Senate would want

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to be a powerless Vice-President. Certainly, in the normal actuarial course of things, Jack was bound to outlive him. In those matters, it is wise to strop Occam's razor. Jack had to carry Texas to win and with Johnson on the ticket he did, barely.

Finally, a correction for Hersh and his readers: He writes, "There was some talk from inside the family of having a Kennedy-Kennedy ticket in 1964"—Robert to replace Lyndon as Vice-President—"most of it, Gore Vidal told me in an interview, coming from Ethel Kennedy, Bobby's wife." Actually, it was Hersh who told me this story last year. As for Ethel Kennedy, I've only met her once. She wanted to know if I was writing a new dirty play, like Edward Albee.

HERSH does not take his book where it is logically headed from the beginning, the murder in Dallas, and what looks to be a Mob killing. Too many lunatics have already checked in on that subject; and Hersh is wise to leave it alone. But it is also frustrating, since the inventors of our official history are forever fetched by that lone mad killer, eaten up with resentment and envy, the two principal American emotions, if our chroniclers are to be believed. Yet the gunning down in public view with wife to one side and all the panoply of state fore and aft is purest Palermo sendoff. Some years ago, the head of the Italian national police, General dalla Chiesa, was similarly killed—at the center of a cortège of police as he drove triumphantly down the main street of Palermo shortly after taking command of the "war" against the Sicilian Mafia.

What, then, as movie producers like to say, is the "take-away" of Hersh's book? This means, what is the audience supposed to think at the end? First, for me, the dangerous inadequacy of the American press. We are seldom, if ever, told what we need to know about how Presidents get elected and then, once in office, what they do of a secret and often unconstitutional nature, particularly abroad. That the political system doesn't work is no news. Whoever can raise the most corporate money by providing services once in office will be elected, or at least get to be on offer. Clinton and Dole spent, it is said, more than half a billion dollars on the last Presidential election. The press accepts all this as just the way things are. On the rare occasions when a journalist does have a specific smoking-gun complaint, he will find few outlets available to him. Soreheads need not apply for space in the mainline press, much less hope for a moment on the Koppel hour of charm.

In retrospect, it has always been incredible that someone as thoroughly disreputable as Joe Kennedy should have been allowed to buy his sons major political careers. So—could that happen today? Yes. It is even worse now, as anyone can attest who has so much as gazed disbelievingly upon Steve Forbes or Michael Huffington, empty suits with full wallets. We all agree, monotonously, that a change in the campaign-financing laws would be helpful, but no Congress or President elected under the present corrupt system could bear to kick over the ladder that got him and his tools to the second floor.

Quite as serious is the danger of electing someone totally dependent on all sorts of mind-altering drugs to enhance mood, not to mention simply stay alive. Curiously, on April 9, 1961, I published a piece about Jack in the London Sunday *Telegraph*. Rereading it, I can see that, subliminally at least, my knowledge of his Addison's disease was bothering me then, just as not having gone public with it in 1959 bothers me now. I wrote that because of the "killing" job of the Presidency, "despite his youth, Kennedy may very well not survive." This is a pretty peculiar thing to write of a "vigorous" man of forty-three. I go on: "Like himself, the men Kennedy has chosen to advise him have not reached any great height until *now*. They must prove themselves now. Government service will be the high point of their lives." Alas, this turned out to be true. Between the second-rate cronies who made up the Irish Mafia—only Larry O'Brien was outstanding—and the "efficient" managers, like McNamara, with no conception of the world they had been set loose in, one wishes that he had taken on a few more aides and advisers who had made their mark elsewhere. But, as he said, plaintively, at the time, "I don't know *anybody* except politicians. Who the hell is Dean Rusk?" So it came to pass, and even now the photogenic charm of the couple at the center of so much corruption and incompetence still casts its spell, and no harsh Hersh? light let in upon them can ever quite dissolve their magic until time itself places Jack in history's oubliette, alongside another handsome assassinated President, James Abram Garfield. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY, by Edmund White (Knopf; $25). White begins this roman à clef—the final volume in a trilogy that encompasses the ascent and decline of a gay life—with the warning that "even writers, those professional exhibitionists, have their moments of reticence." "The Farewell Symphony," though at times noisy with sex and self-disclosure, is ultimately one of those reticent moments. White is an "archeologist of gossip," and he explicitly chronicles the pre-AIDS heyday he enjoyed, but he coyly leaves aside his stated subject, the death from AIDS of his partner. This perverse tactic works: after the cacophony of voices White has raised fades into the silence of death, the absence of the man who mattered most to him becomes overwhelmingly poignant.

AROUND THE BLOCK: THE BUSINESS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD, by Tom Shachtman (Harcourt Brace; $28). To answer such questions as whether small businesses create jobs and how they survive the competition of big business, Shachtman spent a year exploring the assorted enterprises in a square block of Manhattan's Chelsea. The book is crowded with real people speaking candidly about plans and problems as varied as their occupations, which range from dog grooming to wholesale plumbing supplies. A grand idea, splendidly executed.

BOYHOOD: SCENES FROM PROVINCIAL LIFE, by J. M. Coetzee (Viking; $22.95). There's no hint until midway through this disciplined, masterly narrative of growing up in South Africa that it's a memoir rather than a work of fiction, which is perhaps what makes it so exceptional. Instead of drumming up the ghost of a child to serve as a mouthpiece for settling old scores and lamenting old grievances, Coetzee has somehow managed to let loose a real boy on the page, one who speaks his own piece, which in this case is a scorched tale of race, caste, shame, and—at times—hilarious bewilderment.

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF MARIANNE MOORE, edited by Bonnie Costello, with Celeste Goodridge and Cristanne Miller (Knopf; $35). "Selected" here barely hints at the work of Moore's devoted editors. In the course of her life, the poet produced more than thirty thousand letters. (*Lengthy* ones: a report about a trip to New York City written to her family came in at fifty-three pages, and she wrote again the same day.) In the family circle Moore signed herself "Fangs," "Pidge," and "Rat"; as "Marianne" she corresponded with Harriet Monroe, H.D., Eliot, and Pound, to whom she wrote, in 1931, "Lemon-yellow-black was my idea of the underwing of the grasshopper but carmine in connection with the sunset is better." This volume offers the reader what Moore hoped Europe would provide for her friend Monroe Wheeler; that is, "every poetic and enjoyable accessory."

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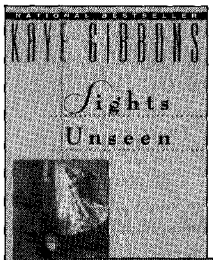
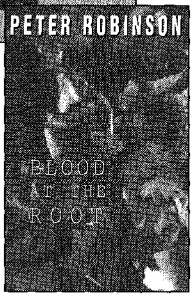
Kaye Gibbons's novel ***SIGHTS UNSEEN*** is about a Southern family, a mother and her little girl. It's about anger and deep hurt, growing up and unconditional love. It's about secrets. And it's about madness, the kind that devours heart and soul as well as sanity. But this is not a story of unremitting gloom and despair. If you've read Kaye Gibbons's work in the past (*Ellen Foster, Charms for the Easy Life,* et al), then you already know that she finds beautiful things in the most unexpected places.



Author **Peter Robinson's** personal history includes numerous accolades and awards for his mystery series set in a small industrial city in Yorkshire, England and featuring British Inspector Detective Alan Banks. In his latest, ***BLOOD AT THE ROOT,*** Banks investigates the slaying of a local neo-Nazi youth, a murder that could prove to have violent and widespread repercussions. Nothing is ever pat or simple, black or white, in Robinson's fiction. People are people after all, with all their foibles and shadings and demons. And what an intriguing species they are.



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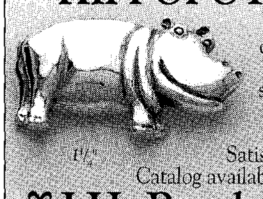

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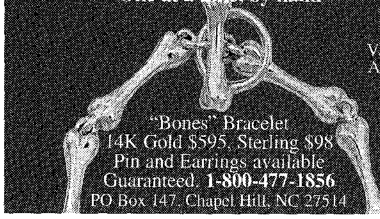

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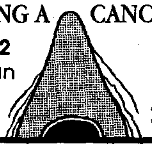

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THE THEATRE

A SHORT HISTORY OF ABDICATION

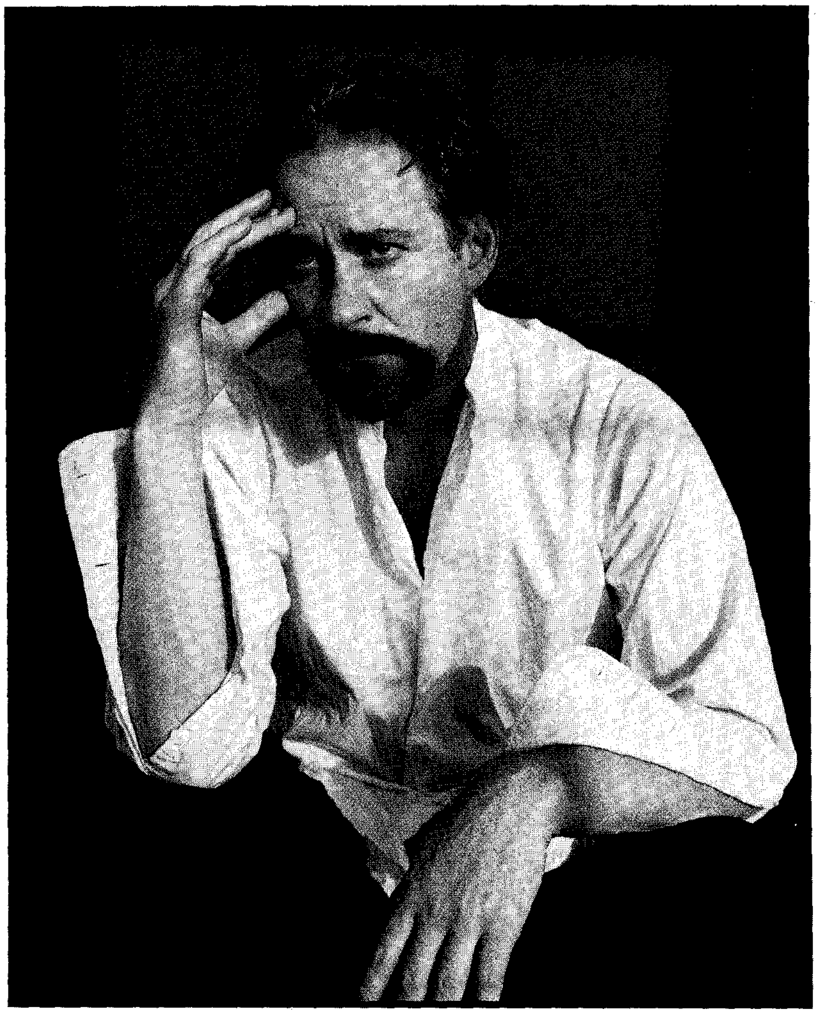
What Americans don't get about the excitable Russian temperament.

BY JOHN LAHR

As the lights come up on David Hare's crisp adaptation of "Ivanov" (at the Vivian Beaumont), which Chekhov wrote in 1887 at the age of twenty-seven, we can make out the inevitable Russian birch trees and the inevitable murk of the Russian vastness. The landscape, which enforced a special quality of brutalizing boredom and agitation in provincial nineteenth-century life, is the backdrop—and perhaps even the shaping power—for what Chekhov saw as a defining national trait. "Russian excitability has one specific quality: it is quickly followed by fatigue," he wrote to his friend and publisher Suvorin. "A man has hardly jumped off the school bench when he takes up, at fever heat, a burden above his strength: he takes on at once schools, the peasants, scientific farming . . . makes speeches, writes to Ministers, combats evil, applauds the good, falls in love. . . . But he has hardly reached thirty or thirty-five when he begins to feel fatigue and boredom." Ivanov, an educated nobleman whose surname, like "Smith" in English, signifies the prototypical, is one such burnt-out case: a progressive farmer, a regional counsellor, a disenchanted husband of a tubercular wife, and a sensational failure. When we meet Ivanov (Kevin Kline), he is up to his eyeballs in debt to the Lebedevs, and unable to pay the workers on his estate. He is both literally and figuratively spent. He is, indeed, in the vanguard of collapse. In the play's first image, Ivanov's boorish steward, the blowhard Mikhail Borkin (Tom McGowan), sneaks up on him and, in jest, holds a gun to his head. "Misha, honestly, you know what my life's like," Ivanov says, immediately making a legend of his regrets. Ivanov can't escape his little cave of consciousness; he's unbiddable and unreachable. Borkin takes Ivanov's hand and presses it to his chest so Ivanov can feel his irregular heartbeat. "I could drop dead any moment," Borkin says. "Then what would you feel?" Ivanov, always the adept of entropy, answers, "I'd feel nothing."

Ivanov ranks with Alceste, in Molière's "The Misanthrope," as one of drama's great sourpusses, but, unlike Alceste, whose discontent is the product of intellectual vanity, Ivanov's melancholy comes from his vulnerability. Drink, money, position, romance, gambling, the "perpetual drizzle of stupid conversations," the posture of rectitude—all the delusions that distract the pesky local society and that Chekhov's haphazard plot stages around Ivanov—don't distract him. He's continually thrown back on his own restless emptiness. "I feel terrible here," he says. "I go to the Lebedevs', I feel worse. I come home, I feel worse still. And so it goes. I am desperate." He is inconsolable, which makes him irresistible to the Lebedevs' twenty-year-old daughter, Sasha (Hope Davis), whom he jilts at the altar after his wife's unmourned death. "You set yourself the task of saving me. The idea of resurrection, that's what you love," he tells Sasha. Here we see characters saying things that in Chekhov's understated mature style he would show in the subtext. "The execution is no damned good," Chekhov wrote a friend about "Ivanov." "I ought to have waited!" He was not wrong; but in the creaky soliloquies and asides it's interesting to see the vestiges of a kind of melodrama which Chekhov's later, streamlined plays would blast from the stage. The characterization of Ivanov, however, is a considerable achievement, and it struck a nerve in Russian society. Ivanov's contradictoriness, his sudden outbursts of rage ("You dirty Jew," he yells at Anna, his wife, to the audible shock of the audience), and his bouts of self-loathing ("Oh, my God, the evil! How evil I am!") are a somewhat crude but ambitious attempt to incarnate the ambiguity that was at the core of Chekhov's notion of personality and his radical revision of Russian dramaturgy: to "show life and men as they are, and not as they would look if you put them on stilts."

What "Ivanov" dramatizes is not just manic-depression but a particular crisis of faith: the half-life of resignation that follows the loss of an ideal. "I was full of faith, I believed," Ivanov says. "So few people bother. I worked and loved and tried and hoped and gave, all in full measure, without even measuring, never stopping to think: am I giving too much?" Ivanov's story is a short history of abdications: the romantic ideal ("I swore to love her for ever," he says of his wife); the social ideal ("My estate is in ruins"); the political ideal ("I have no hope, no expectation. My sense of tomorrow is gone"). But Americans don't live easily with the ironic undertow of such negative feeling. As a nation, we are optimistic and proactive. Our response to Ivanov's chronic existential complaint would be to do something, see somebody, get busy. Although things look authentic on the play's handsome set (designed by John Lee Beatty), they don't feel it. American actors can't really inhale the nihilistic ozone of Chekhov. So Gerald Gutierrez's production is competent without being compelling. A kind of emotional gauze covers the proceedings: we see the outlines of the wounds without quite being touched by them. "I have not introduced a single villain nor an angel, although I could not refuse myself buffoons," Chekhov wrote about the play. And although Gutierrez doesn't really focus the social satire, the buffoonish caricatures do well: Marian Seldes as the malicious, penny-pinching Mrs. Lebedev; Jeff Weiss as the bridge-playing obsessive Kosykh; and William Preston as the bearded, bandy-legged old retainer Gavrila, who hasn't a line but whose forlorn presence is hilariously precise. The casting of the main parts, however, seems strangely off kilter: Jayne Atkinson's Anna, who loses everything for love, doesn't find the tragic dimension in her solitude, and Hope Davis's Sasha exhibits none of the character's vaunted wit and charisma. Even an expert player like Kevin Kline, who powerfully conveys Ivanov's honesty and intelligence, can't seem to find the raw, nervy, spiritually deracinated mood of decline in the character. Max Wright's charming, drunken Lebedev, alternately wishing his gargoylish wife dead and offering his friend Ivanov money behind her back ("Go over to the house, put it in her hand, and say to her, 'Zinaida Savishna, here is your money, drop dead'"), is the most fully explored and vivid performance in this production. He and the rest of the wedding guests chase the gun-toting Ivanov around the drawing room, and in the ensuing farcical scrum the gun goes off almost as if by accident. Ivanov stumbles away from the pack and falls dead downstage. This plays as a happy ending of sorts. "Let me free!" are Ivanov's last words; and, finally, he is.



Kevin Kline as Ivanov, whose self-loathing character was Chekhov's early attempt to "show life and men as they are." Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

WHERE "Ivanov" is a first full-length play that, despite its problems, broadcasts Chekhov's originality, "Mojo," at the Atlantic Theatre Company, is a first full-length play that broadcasts only the reading of its young author, Jez Butterworth. This thin pot of English literary porridge, directed by Neil Pepe, is composed of two parts Mamet, one part Pinter, and a smattering of Shepard. The play, about the struggle for control of a club called Ezra's Atlantic, in London's Soho in the late fifties, flirts notionally with a sort of Kray Brothers homosexual underworld mayhem. Two pill-popping spivs, Sweets and Potts (Patrick Fitzgerald and Matthew Ross), think they've hit pay dirt when they discover a young rocker called Silver Johnny—whom Ezra has introduced to Sam Ross, a high-rolling heavy—only to end up under siege when the occasion turns into a gangland rubout. Sam, who never appears onstage, apparently kills Ezra, who never appears onstage, either; Ezra's slaughtered body does, however, appear onstage, but only in two garbage cans, in the second act. This is the theatrical equivalent of producing the rabbit without first showing us the hat. What we get, in sum, is one severed boss, one assassinated gofer (Chris Bauer), and one ludicrous act of quasi bondage on the club's ground floor. The characters converse in a flashy, studied, and totally garbled Cockney that is as unreal as the story's premise. Since the stakes of the play are unbelievable, speech is just a shallow vamp: energy calling attention to itself. ♦

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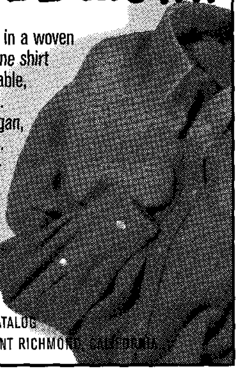

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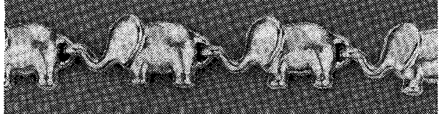

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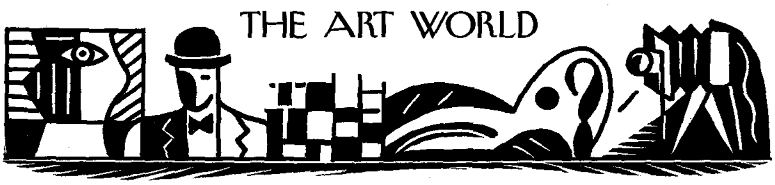


THE FAME FACTORY

The true subversiveness of Andy Warhol.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

"The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion," now playing at the Whitney Museum (through January 18th), is a real downer. Organized by the Andy Warhol Museum, in Pittsburgh, its aim is to demonstrate the extent to which Warhol's commingling of art and fashion influenced both those enterprises and helped erase the uneasy boundaries between them. That's a legitimate premise for an exhibition, but there is so little of Warhol's art on view, and the photographs, videotapes, clothes, magazine covers, memorabilia, and other artifacts that have been brought together from the Warhol Museum's archives reflect so faithfully the tawdry underside of Warholian glamour, that the over-all effect is thin, dated, and glum. I'm afraid the show will delight only the stern moralizers who see Warhol as a vastly overrated artist and use him as a whipping boy for everything that went wrong in this country during the unspeakable nineteen-sixties.

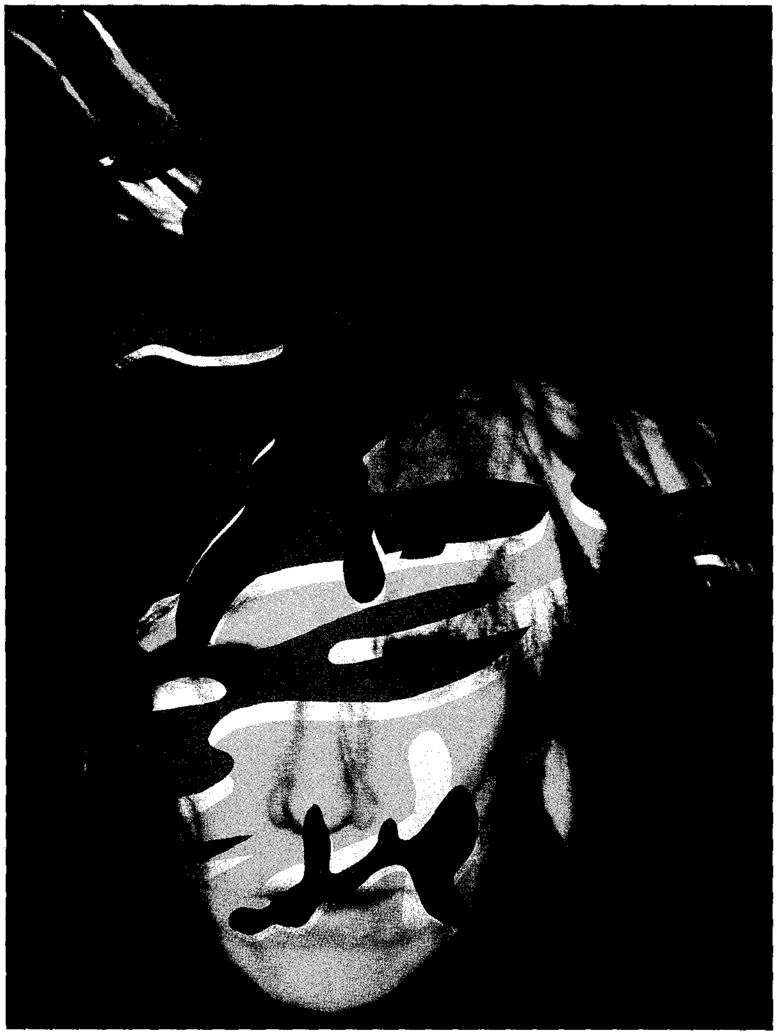
For a long time, I had an embarrassed toe in that dour camp. I just couldn't see what made Warhol so important. This was troubling, because a great many artists clearly found him a groundbreaking and liberating figure, and a number of critics whose writings I admired agreed with them. Young artists kept saying that Warhol had changed the context of art, opening it up to mass culture and the enormous power of mechanically reproduced images. But hadn't that process been going on since the early years of the century, when Picasso and Braque started using bits of newspaper and other references to popular culture as collage elements in their paintings? Arthur C. Danto, our leading philosopher-critic, has written of his revelation, in 1964, on first seeing Warhol's Brillo-box sculptures in an art gallery: by producing a work of art that was visually indistinguishable from something that was not a work of art (that is to say, a box of real Brillo pads at the supermarket), Warhol, according to Danto, "had raised, from within and in its definitive form, the question of the philosophical nature of art." If that was the case, though, what had Duchamp been doing in 1915 when he bought a snow shovel in a hardware store, painted a nonsense phrase and his signature on the blade, and allowed it to join his aesthetic œuvre? Most of the things Warhol was said to have done to change art, it seemed to me, had been done before, by others. He had certainly pushed the opening-up process a lot further, but so had Rauschenberg, Johns, Stella, and Lichtenstein, and their work had always struck me as being a lot richer and more rewarding than Warhol's.

There is no denying the impact of Warhol's early work. The soup cans, the silk-screen icons of Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor, and Jackie Kennedy, the car crashes and the electric chairs and the cow wallpaper demonstrated an uncanny ability to appropriate the one image, out of millions, that carried a lasting charge, and to present it with all the force and economy of an award-winning advertisement. You got the message instantly, and it was the same message every time; there was none of that deepening complexity you found in repeated viewings of a painting by Jasper Johns. Frank Stella had sounded the tough, sixties note when he said of his own early stripe paintings that there weren't any humanistic values mixed in with them, that "only what can be seen there *is* there." Stella had gone on to paint increasingly complicated, increasingly three-dimensional works, which pushed the concept of abstract art to new pictorial levels, but Warhol's images never gave back any more than that first visual hit. When he repeated the same image a dozen times, or thirty-six times, or a hundred and sixty-eight times on a canvas, critics said that he was evoking the techniques of mass production to express twentieth-century mass culture—and, in truth, by this time Warhol's art really was a species of mass production. Working with several assistants in the silver-painted loft that he called the Factory, Warhol could turn out dozens of his silk-screen paintings in an afternoon. "Andy's art work came easily to him and never caused any strain or insecurity in him," according to Paul Morrissey, one of the mainstays of the Factory operation. This bothered me, because art, even Pop art, is rarely *that* easy.

In the mid-nineteen-sixties, Warhol stopped painting, more or less, and put most of his energy into making films. Although claims have been advanced for his revolutionary contributions to the art of cinema, Warhol himself said that his films were more interesting to talk about than to see, and nobody would contend that they involved much work. Warhol's usual procedure was to set up a scene, turn the camera on, and let the Factory weirdos improvise. What he and Paul Morrissey kept hoping was that some Hollywood studio would give them the money to make a feature film; Warhol could never understand why that didn't happen. What happened instead was that a deranged weirdo named Valerie Solanis, the author of a film script that Warhol had declined to produce, came to the Factory one day in 1968 and shot him twice with a .32-calibre revolver, not quite fatally. That pretty much ended his film career, but it probably furthered his inexorable and perplexing (to me, anyway) ascent to the title of World's Most Famous Artist.

THE first and only time I interviewed Warhol was in 1969, a little more than a year after the shooting. The interview was in connection with a piece that I was doing for the catalogue of his 1970 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum. Warhol wasn't anything like what I had expected. Instead of a barely articulate, slightly sinister manipulator of troubled souls—a "Sphinx with no secret," as Truman Capote once called him—he came across as playful, sly, funny, and very alert. He had his own tape recorder going throughout the interview—he taped everyone in those days—and he asked the first question, which was "Do you have a big cock?" I wasn't as thrown as I might have been, because I thought he'd said "clock"—"Not especially," I replied, glancing at my wrist—but we both understood right away who was in charge. He said he had tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade John Coplans, who was organizing the retrospective, to limit it to a single painting. "It doesn't really matter if you show one picture or fifty," Warhol told me, "and it would be so much more elegant to show just one." He went on to say he wished there was a way to make money without working. "I thought after I was shot maybe I wouldn't have to work anymore, but I do," he confided. "And it's so hard to get ideas." He talked about Frank Stella ("That's where I got my idea of repetition") and about why he admired Jasper Johns (because "he gets five hundred dollars for a drawing—even Picasso didn't get that much"), and he asked if I could get into my article the fact that Eleanor Ward, his former dealer, had a painting of his that she didn't own and wouldn't give back. At the end of the interview, he said, "Have I lied enough?"

Warhol had fun lying about inconsequential things, but in his art he never lied. That, I eventually came to understand, was what made him important. He laid out some unblinking truths about the society in which he lived, worked, and achieved his lifelong ambition to become world-famous. Andy's truths were not very comforting, God knows, and they certainly did not apply to the whole of American society, and they were not embedded in individual works of art but emerged as a sort of emanation from his paintings, his films, his published writings, his magazine (*Interview*), and his various other activities. The principal truth, the one underlying all the others, was that art no longer mattered. It took someone with Warhol's unflinching candor to perceive that art, for a wide range of educated people, had lost not only the old humanistic values that Stella had specifically renounced but



Warhol's "Self-Portrait," 1986. He was absolutely consistent in his anti-heroic take on art.

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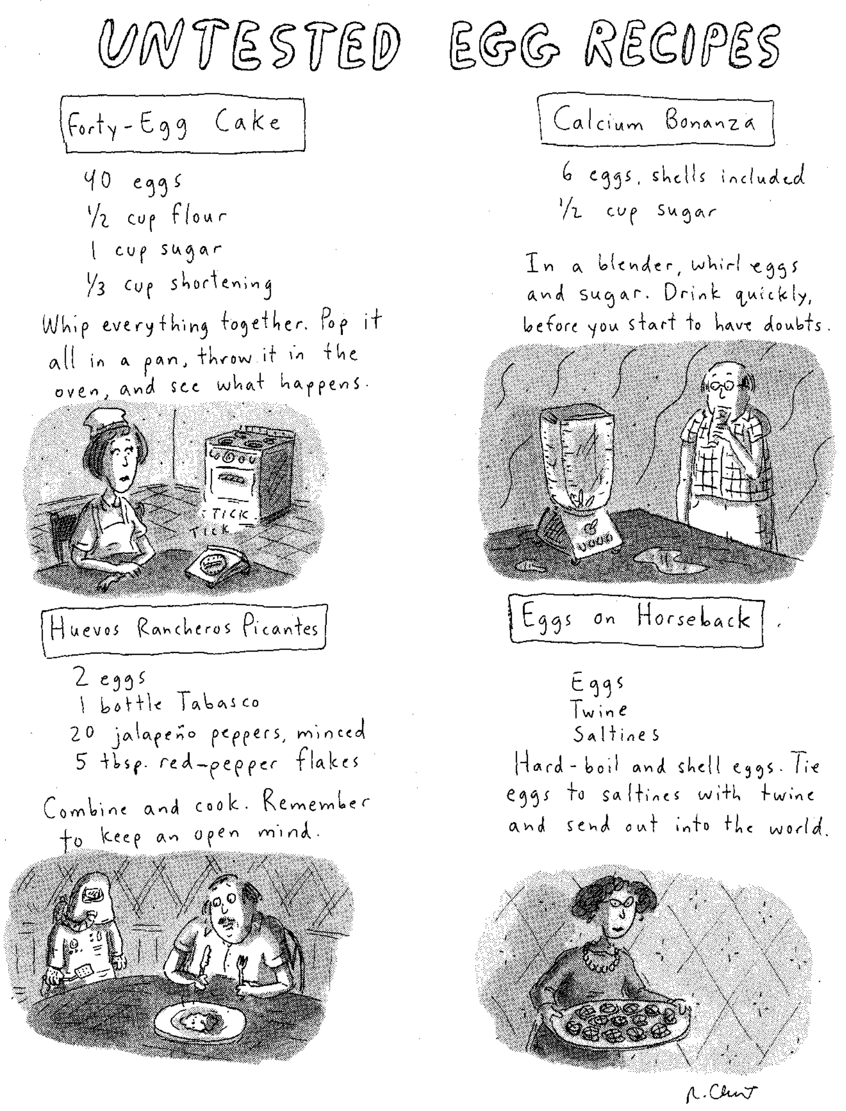
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every other value that was ever assigned it—save one, which was its convertibility into cash. Beauty, grace, feeling, knowledge, insight, pleasure, skillful facture, religious inspiration—all these seemed to be on the way out, Warhol foresaw, and, that being the case, why should art, or whatever came after art, be anything but easy?

On returning to painting in the nineteen-seventies, Warhol supported his multiple operations by doing portraits of the rich and famous. He photographed them himself, had the photograph transferred to a silk screen, laid the image down on a canvas with pre-painted background colors, and then altered or enhanced it with other colors, which he applied himself—quite a painterly and labor-intensive procedure, which the clients usually found to be flattering. He charged twenty-five thousand dollars for a portrait, and five thousand for each additional version. Warhol went out almost every single evening during those years, and one of the reasons was to meet people who might give him portrait commissions. He had become what he called a business artist. "Business art is the step that comes after Art," he wrote, in his very readable 1975 book "The Philosophy of Andy Warhol." In the sixties, people used to look down on business, he went on to say, "but making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art." The Warhol claque usually assumes that Andy was putting us on with comments like that, but I think he meant them. He was absolutely consistent in his anti-heroic take on art. "Why do people think artists are special?" he inquired elsewhere in his "Philosophy." "It's just another job."

Andy Warhol was the ninety-seven-pound weakling who ended up kicking sand in the face of bullyboy Jackson Pollock. Instead of building muscle, though, he learned to turn his weaknesses

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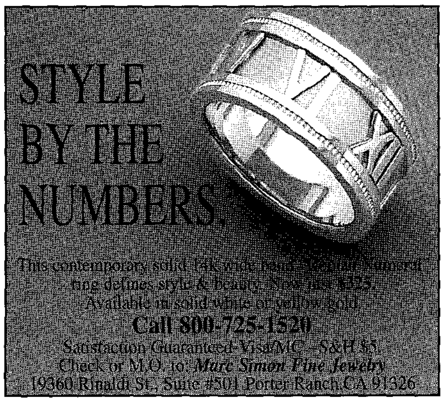
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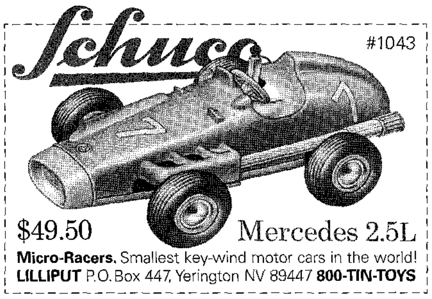
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into strengths—mainly by accepting and flaunting them. Although he used to say he was afraid that he might look in the mirror one day and see nothing there, he described to his friend Brigid Berlin (he tells us in the "Philosophy" book) just what his mirror did reflect: "The bored languor, the wasted pallor. . . . The chic freakiness, the basically passive astonishment. . . . The chintzy joy, the revelatory tropisms, the chalky, puckish mask, the slightly Slavic look. . . . The childlike, gum-chewing naïveté, the glamour rooted in despair, the self-admiring carelessness, the perfected otherness, the wispiness, the shadowy, voyeuristic, vaguely sinister aura. . . . The shaggy, silver-white hair, soft and metallic. The cords of the neck standing out around the big Adam's apple. It's all there, B. Nothing is missing. I'm everything my scrapbook says I am." He knew, of course, that the way he looked had a lot to do with his uncanny hold on the popular imagination. He also knew that most of the people who recognized him by name or by sight had never seen any of his paintings.

Warhol worshipped Duchamp, with good reason, and Duchamp was fascinated by Warhol. "If you take a Campbell soup can and repeat it fifty times, you are not interested in the retinal image," Duchamp said once. "What interests you is the concept that wants to put fifty Campbell soup cans on a canvas." Neither Warhol nor Duchamp really left art behind, as each often appeared to have done, but Warhol did something even more subversive: in becoming the Most Famous Artist, he made art seem unimportant. This paradoxical feat is echoed by the Whitney show, with its emphasis on his early commercial designs and on the Factory, its superstars and transvestites, and the jet-set fashion crowd that eventually replaced them in Warhol's personal pantheon. The show had the incidental effect of making me wonder how long it will be before some young artist or group of artists comes along to challenge Warhol's demolition job and reopen the question of contemporary art's relevance. So far, more than ten years after his death, that hasn't happened.

In the meantime, it gets harder and harder to ignore what Warhol achieved. As his fellow-artist Carl Andre rather bleakly put it, "Andy Warhol was the perfect glass and mirror of his age and certainly the artist we deserved." ♦

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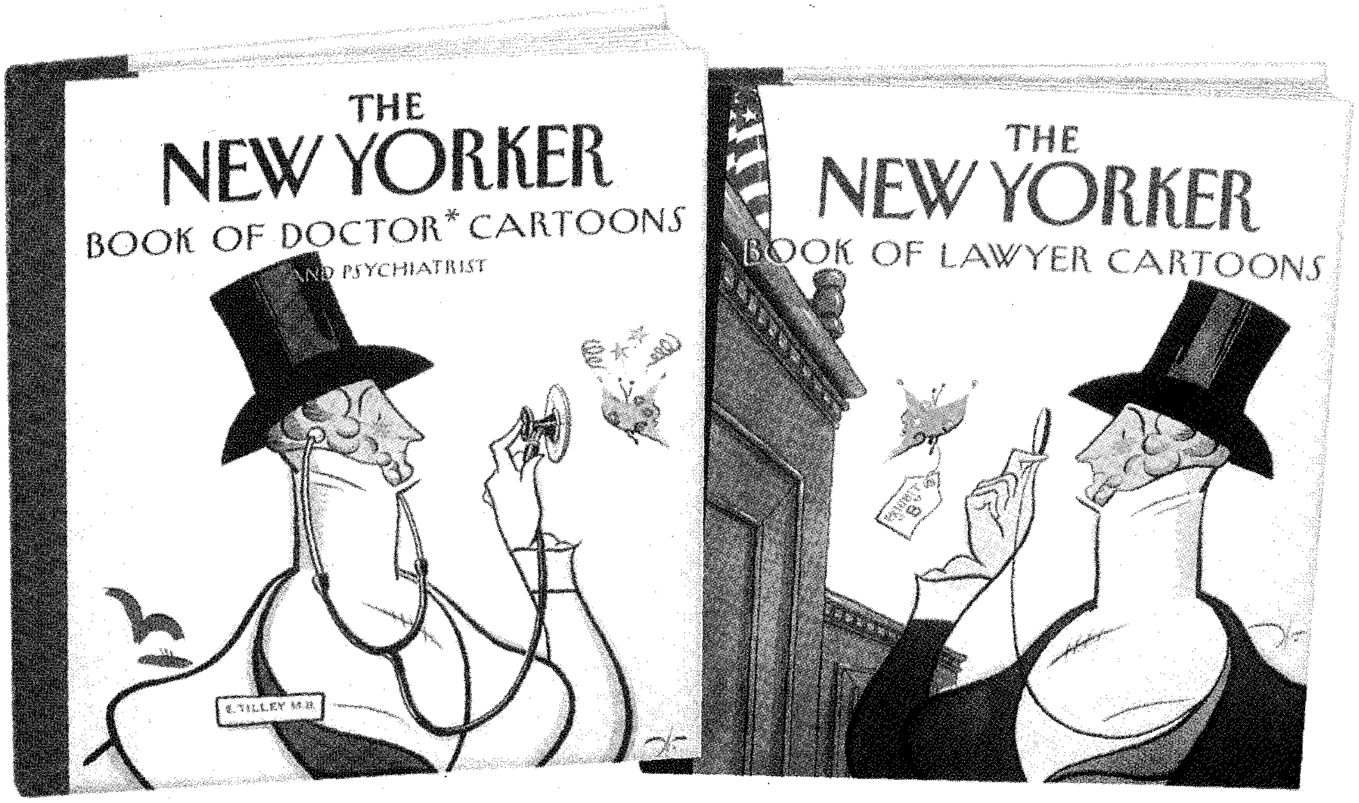

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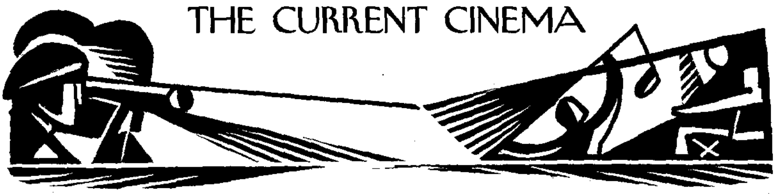


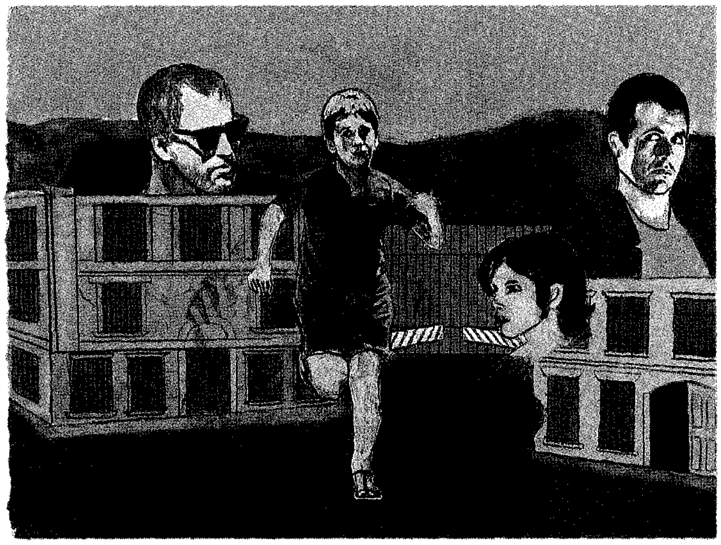
THE CURRENT CINEMA

UNDER SIEGE

Nervous reality in Bosnia, and biotech fantasy in outer space.

BY ANTHONY LANE

"WHY are you doing this?" "I don't know." That's how people talk in Michael Winterbottom's "Welcome to Sarajevo," the first major movie about the war in Bosnia to be released here. The film is a desperate testament to the forces of impulse and prejudice, but it doesn't pretend to understand all, or even half, of what it shows. This makes it the opposite of, say, CNN, and if that doesn't make you go and see it nothing will.



The random crackle of outrage surrounds an orphan's flight in "Welcome to Sarajevo."

Stephen Dillane plays Michael Henderson, a British TV correspondent who is covering the siege of Sarajevo in 1992. He is accompanied by his cameraman, Greg (James Nesbitt); his producer, Jane (Kerry Fox); and their new driver, Risto (Goran Visnjic). Their life is a discord: sudden flashes of activity meshed with long stretches of hanging out at a semi-wrecked hotel, waiting for stories to break or mulling over the broken ones of the past day. All this rings true to the wired weariness of most war journalism, although it's worth asking why so many movies need to filter war through the eyes (and the smarting consciences) of Western journalists. One horribly practical answer is that, without the presence of stars—"Welcome to Sarajevo" boasts Woody Harrelson as a hotheaded reporter named Flynn—we would never get to see the films. More honorably, "Welcome to Sarajevo" takes all the obvious objections into account; it nags and snipes at the point where journalism has to stop.

One day, Henderson visits an orphanage near the front line and decides to campaign for the stranded children to be moved to safety. Finally, one busload is given permission to leave, and Henderson agrees to accompany it. Earlier, in a rash moment, he promised to help Emira (Emira Nusevic), a quiet and admirably unsweet girl who warmed to him at the orphanage; but Emira can come only if he smuggles her out and agrees to look after her at least until the end of the war. And that's the crunch. It sounds perilously close to sentimental, but Dillane's Henderson cuts such a still figure, with his clipped delivery and inward fretting, that you follow him through the agony of his decision and never catch a hint of liberal pose. Dillane, moreover, is considerably younger than Michael Nicholson, the real British reporter on

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whom the story is based; he's the right age to act as a new father to Emira, and somehow that tightens the screws of the plot.

The best and itchiest thing about "Welcome to Sarajevo" is that Winterbottom keeps denying you relaxation. The bus is nearly in the clear when a gang of Serbian thugs comes aboard to check the nationalities of the children; Emira survives, but the sight of an armed warlord snatching a bawling baby and holding it aloft in triumph, like a fresh kill, is so distressing that you're left doubled up for the rest of the film. The random crackle of outrage, in fact, is what this movie has instead of a basic rhythm; the shape, or surreal shapelessness, of the drama functions as a kind of homage to the lives that were lived (and lost) in Sarajevo: a white wedding comes under fire; a man goes home to his apartment, takes a book from the shelf, and gets a bullet in the back.

The movie was filmed in Sarajevo itself, in 1996, after the ceasefire. Needless to say, the urge to reconstruct the devastation is fraught with risk. For the scene of a massacre in a breadline, Winterbottom cuts from his actors running around to television footage of the actual event. How can a film director, at such moments, be anything but a mercenary with a good eye? Again, however, Winterbottom is there before us; we sense his self-mockery in the instructions that Henderson shouts to the cameraman, seeking the juicy detail: "Greg, get the vegetables! Get the guy with the eye!" I like the nervousness of this picture—the way it hops from one story to another, the candor with which it overlays its own strident advocacy with portraits of people who would prefer simply to get by, or to rest in peace. Take Risto, the charming driver, who is thrilled when Flynn gives him three eggs to make an omelette. We think we know Risto well, but later we find him manning a checkpoint, holding a rifle, and cheerfully confessing to having killed with it. "It was not so bad," he says. "You know. Therapeutic." How unlike "Welcome to Sarajevo," a fine and fierce movie that makes you feel a whole lot worse.

"ALIEN RESURRECTION" begins with a yawning, ductile swirl of yellow organic matter, dotted here and there with eyes and mouths. If this was intended to freshen us up for the ensuing gross-out, it doesn't work, for the simple reason that it reminds you, instantly and irreparably, of really good cake batter. We've reached the fourth installment in the exploits of Ripley (Sigourney Weaver), and by now the regular pattern of suspense has worn thin. The only real surprise is that Lieutenant Ripley has been around for nearly three hundred years and still hasn't been promoted. No wonder she looks mad.

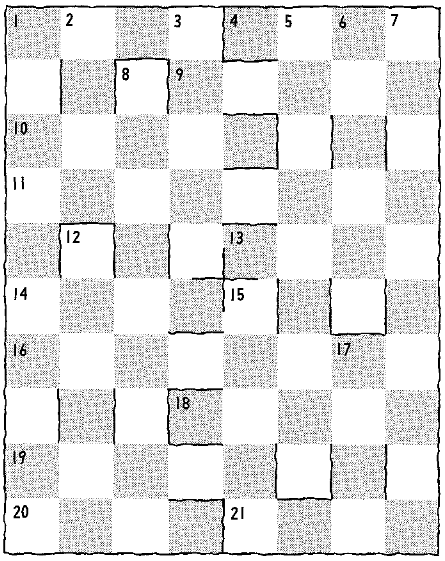
Actually, at the climax of the previous film, she fell into a fiery furnace and was utterly consumed, but "Alien Resurrection" has an answer for everything, bringing us a new in vitro Ripley through the miracle of biotechnology. This model is pretty much like the older ones, except that all trace of memory and emotion has been excised; if the space job doesn't work out, I guess she can always go into advertising. The movie allows Weaver one basic expression—a frosty, knowing bio-smile—and a typical Ripley speech runs as follows: "She'll breed. You'll die." But not me. I'll live. So there.

There are various fools here for Ripley to smirk at: a shipful of scientists, including Gediman (Brad Dourif), who honestly believe that they can not only breed aliens but *tame* them. It's something to ponder for future sequels: the most fearsome killing machine in the universe, reduced to chasing cats and sticking its head out of your car window. Also on board is a gang of smugglers, among them the whey-faced Call (Winona Ryder); their task, as far as I could make out, is to off-load bodies for alien cultivation, although the story is so lurching and confused that they may equally have turned up for a wine tasting.

The director is Jean-Pierre Jeunet, who seemed like an inspired choice: the gothic claustrophobia of his previous creations, "Delicatessen" and "City of Lost Children," should have shaded gracefully into the gloom of the "Alien" atmosphere. In the event, "Alien Resurrection" reminds you how efficiently the first two movies, for all their damp aroma of sexual suggestion, served up the simple pleasures of the thriller. Both Ridley Scott and James Cameron knew that the less we saw of the monster—the more we were tempted with brutal glimpses of jaw and claw—the scarier it became, whereas Jeunet opts for full-length shots, not realizing that an alien with stomping feet and swishing tail looks like just another T. rex. Also, the alien queen appears to have switched from egg-laying to natural birth, producing a bonny white babe in the final reel. In space, of course, no one can hear you scream, so how will she know when it needs changing? ◆

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 24 BY MIKE SHENK



ACROSS

1 Father accepts Republican support (4)
4 Snakes that are venomous as afterthought (4)
9 Former Vice-President again accepts $1,000 (5)
10 Color lines getting exploited (5)
11 In time, Giant running back is essential (8)
13 Sound from west wing (4)
14 Look for Indian worshipper at hearing (4)
16 Suffers humiliation at investing money in trust (4,4)
18 Middle Eastern native in small Swedish car (5)
19 One that hurts an inhabitant of a Midwestern state (5)
20 Writer Ferber's "East and Westward" (4)
21 Distinctive flavor of brown sugar at heart (4)

DOWN

1 Resist a pie prepared in bakeshop (10)
2 Downpour destroyed Iran (4)
3 Quiet times for congressional workers (5)
5 Upcoming hits containing an instrument in the percussion family (5,4)
6 Audibly sells bikes (6)
7 Engrossing big-band music takes permit (10)
8 Barhopping changed from then to now (2,3,4)
12 "Poseidon Adventure"'s début taken in by upset leaders of Venice (3,3)
15 Insufficient time to follow up examination (5)
17 Ball and racket for Thor's father (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 23 appears at right. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

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ANSWERS TO 8 x 10 CRYPTIC NO. 23

ACROSS

1 REJE + CT (*jeer* anag.)
7 OXEN (*oven* with Roman numeral V changed to X)
8 IN RE (rev. of ERNIe)
9 H(IDD)EN (*did* anag.)
10 F(LOWER)ED
12 C + OVER
13 SAP + OR
14 ETHEREAL (hidden)
16 TI(EPI)N (*pie* anag.)
17 ANTI (hidden)
18 REED (*read* hom.)
19 TAW + DRY

DOWN

1 pROOF
2 EX(PLO)ITING
3 JEHOVA + H (*have* OJ anag.)
4 CIDER (anag.)
5 FREELOADER (anag.)
6 RENDER (2 defs.)
11 R(I + PEN)ED
12 CRETAN (anag.)
13 SEPIA (anag.)
15 LAD + Y (*y* is Spanish for *and*)

IF UNABLE TO REACH TELEPHONE LISTINGS, SEND REQUESTS, WITH ISSUE DATE NOTED, TO THE NEW YORKER READER SERVICES, 20 WEST 43RD ST., NEW YORK, NY 10036.

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

SURFING FOR CREDIT

BY FRANK GANNON

> Some companies are using the Internet to market ready-made term papers. Incensed over the wide availability of this cyberscholarship, educators are waging war against the high-tech term-paper mills. —*USA Today.*

HELLO, term-paper lovers. Check out what's new at our site this week—thousands of megabytes of fine papers in every length, subject, and price range imaginable. Each item we sell is guaranteed to contain an abundance of college-level knowledge presented in smart college-level prose. Download these samples, and get ready for Christmas break!

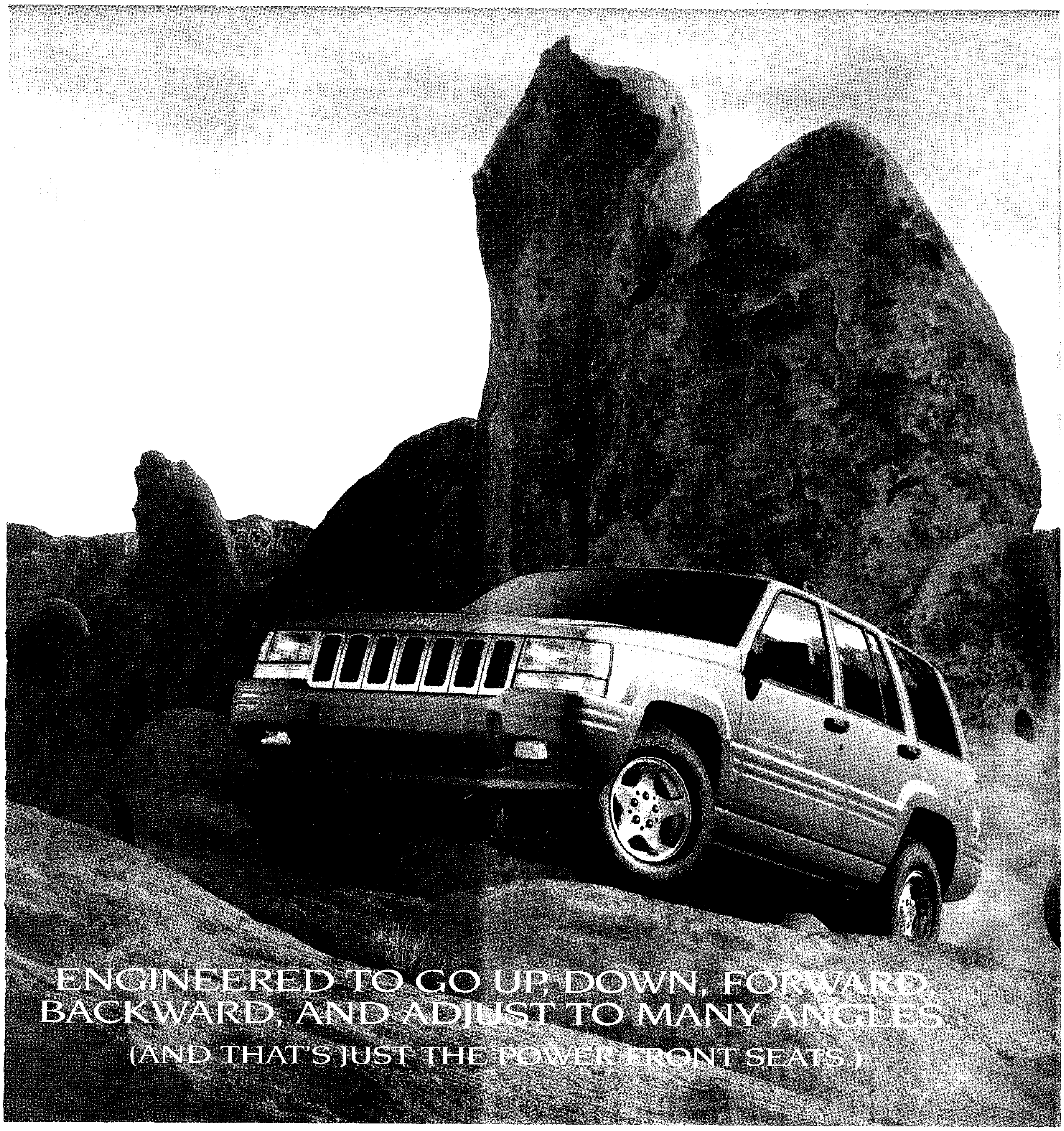
ITEM #612—"Dante's Inferno: An Architectural Overview" is a ten-page paper by Paul Gartland, a history major from Texas Tech. Gartland pulled a 2.2 last quarter but assures us that he was "just slacking off." This quarter, he's pounding the books pretty hard, and this essay shows what he's capable of when he spends more time in the library and less time on alcoholic probation (a punishment that Gartland calls "way harsh. For just a six-pack of tall Bud? You've got to be kidding"). His paper, which he finished last weekend, examines Dante's version of Hell as a real place, not unlike the faculty lounge, with, as Gartland puts it, "rooms and everything." It also includes some unrelated lithographs of medieval Venice that Gartland snagged from the rare-books room—a bargain at only $37.95. It's not going to last long!

ITEM #451—"Skepticism in Montaigne" is a big, dense, impressive paper. What a surprise to find it weighing in at only twenty-one pages! The sentences are long and brimming with semicolons and other punctuation, and there are lots of words we bet you'll have to look up. (When's the last time you saw "vulpine" and "chiromancy" used in the same sentence?) It was written by Matthew Carlisle—a name that sounds like Rhodes-scholar material to us—when he was only a sophomore at Rutgers. He tells us he got a B-plus, but that "the prof grades like 'Hud, the man with the barbed-wire soul.'" We've seen papers this hefty going for sixty—even ninety—dollars, but we're offering this for just thirty-five bucks, because we always got a big kick out of Montaigne, even if we can't pronounce his name. You won't find more insight per dollar.

ITEM #444—Put on your beret, light up a "reefer," and be the first lucky buyer to hand in "Jack Kerouac and William Blake: A Comparative Study." Robert North Whitehead, a senior at (where else?) N.Y.U., turned in this paper last September in a Twentieth-Century American Lit class. Not only did he pull an A, but the professor wrote "a fresh observation" and "nice use of parentheses" in the margins. At the end of the paper, Whitehead says, "Thus I conclude my valid and fascinating study of two artists that are rarely linked—both of whom were woman-mad, gassed on life, and driving like crazy over the bones of the dead." You'll be snapping your fingers and bleating "Round my golden tent like little lambs rejoice, Daddy-O!" by the time you get to the end of this ditty. Only twenty-five skins!

ITEM #702—Feeling macabre? One of your study partners a little on the ghoulish side? If so, we have just the thing: "Edgar Allan Poe's Critical Reception in Flanders." Thirty dollars delivers a spine-tingling catalogue of nineteenth-century Flemish literary reaction to Poe's *très* creepy work. Sally Schmart, a senior majoring in semiotics at the University of Georgia (and herself a descendant of an incestuous tangle of great-aunts, grandfathers, and cousins), has written fifteen chilling pages on the old crypt keeper and how the great Flemish intellectuals took to having a little blood in their pâté. Sally got a B-minus, but we're sure you'll ace whatever course will let you shoehorn in this unusual item.

ITEM #313—The holiday season is upon us, and once again it's time to gather the kids and the old folks, get a toasty fire started in the hearth, and read aloud from the profoundly pessimistic works of Thomas Hardy. And now we have a special companion piece to these family get-togethers: a fifteen-pager entitled "Fatalism and Foot Problems in the Works of Thomas Hardy." Sure, you could squander this essay by handing it in for academic credit, but our bet is that you're like dozens of folks who have E-mailed us saying they want to hang on to this chestnut for holiday seasons to come. Twenty-five dollars is a small price to pay for a Christmas greeting from the novelist who brought you "Jude the Obscure," an eloquent statement of human life as a cheerless stumble into a Wessex cemetery plot. Buy now, and you'll be thanking yourself later, because this one will disappear faster than you'll lose your place in "Tess of the d'Urbervilles." ♦



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